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of  
the  
Confederacy

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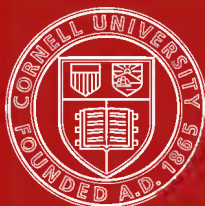
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CAPTAIN FRANK E. MORAN



# Bastiles of the Confederacy

A REPLY TO  
JEFFERSON DAVIS



BEING A NARRATIVE OF THE TREATMENT OF UNION PRISONERS IN THE MILITARY PRISONS OF THE SOUTH DURING THE WAR OF THE REBELLION. FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE UNITED STATES WAR DEPARTMENT, REPORTS BY COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS, CAPTURED CONFEDERATE ARCHIVES, AND FROM EVIDENCE TAKEN AT THE TRIAL OF CAPTAIN HENRY WIRZ, IN 1865, AND FROM THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE AUTHOR DURING TWENTY MONTHS CAPTIVITY IN SIX MILITARY PRISONS OF THE SOUTH. WITH A REVIEW OF THE EXCHANGE CONTROVERSY.

BY

FRANK E. MORAN

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PHILADELPHIA WEEKLY TIMES and  
other journals



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## PREFACE

IN adding this modest contribution to the annals of the Civil War, the writer has been actuated by motives sufficiently stated in the introductory pages, and not with the intention, much less the wish, to cast a shade of disparagement upon the more voluminous narratives of such writers as John McElroy, Warren Lee, Goss, Ambrose Spencer, Albert D. Richardson, Junius Henri Browne, Willard, Glazier and others, whose pens have pictured with graphic fidelity and eloquence the tragic and pathetic scenes which they witnessed while sharing captivity with him in the military prisons of the South.

If a reason is required besides those given in the text for this publication at this time, it seems to be supplied by the posthumous paper of Jefferson Davis on "Andersonville," begun in *Belford's Magazine* for the present month (January, 1890).

The writer has at irregular intervals since the war contributed to the newspapers of Philadelphia, New York and other cities a large number of sketches and reminiscences of his twenty months' experiences and observations in six of the chief war prisons of the South. These sketches have been mainly confined to the narration of personal adventures of his comrades and his own in their various escapes and recaptures, and of the less sombre features of prison

life, a series appearing in 1881-2 in the *Philadelphia Weekly Times*; his latest contribution being his illustrated article in the *Century Magazine* for March, 1888, entitled "Colonel Rose's Tunnel at Libby Prison."

In none of these fragmentary memoirs of his captivity has he touched, beyond brief and incidental mention, the subject of the *treatment* of the Union prisoners in the South. That he has ventured to do so now was not an act of his personal choice wholly, but one which circumstances, amply set forth elsewhere, seemed to render a public and patriotic duty.

As a soldier bearing four wounds received in battle, with the deeper physical hurts inflicted in the prisons of the South, and as the only one of three wounded brothers who has survived the cruelties in those fearful death-pens, he feels that after four years of humble but faithful service to the country in its need, he and his prison comrades have at least as legitimate right to be heard as Union witnesses in Northern magazines and newspapers, as have their jailers.

That the post-mortem account of Andersonville by Jefferson Davis will attract the interest of a vast number of readers, is fully assured by the conspicuous place he filled in war history; by his recent death; and by reason of the peculiar relations that inseparably link his name with the treatment of the Federal prisoners. It would be fortunate for his

fame if it could also secure him the acquittal he seeks thus tardily, and in the last year of his life, of the awful iniquity with which an overwhelming majority of his countrymen have charged him, and believe him guilty.

Late in the evening of his days, and a quarter of a century after the grave has closed over sixty thousand Union martyrs of those cruel prisons, he awakened to the truth that the plaudits of a Section is not the verdict of a Nation, nor the final judgment that history will carry to posterity.

There is something painful and pathetic in the spectacle of this aged and enfeebled man as he charges his last publishers (after a peevish quarrel with the others), to send his last plea of innocence, un mutilated, to the country.

His wronged but forbearing countrymen will not grudge him this parting favor; but the truth must stand and the irrevocable verdict awaits.

The mighty crime and guilt of Andersonville will cling to the name of Jefferson Davis when his monument is dust, when the records of the bloody sectional revolt which he led are eaten by worms, and until the Divine hand shall draw over the men and deeds of time the mantle of oblivion.

THE AUTHOR.

*Philadelphia, January, 1890.*



## INTRODUCTION.

**I**F an alien unfamiliar with our history had landed on these shores anywhere south of Mason and Dixon's line during the first fortnight of December, 1889, and had seen the National flag half-masted on the public buildings, and populous cities festooned with sable symbols of mourning, he would have been justified in the conclusion that the American people had been bereaved by the death of some patriot or statesman of the first magnitude. Nor would the impression have been dispelled when he opened the morning papers that announced the death of Jefferson Davis, and read the eloquent tributes paid by Southern contemporaries to his public career and character. The absence of these signs of public regard and sorrow at the North—and at the National Capital in particular—would have been so conspicuous as to excite the traveler's surprise, and would have led him to seek a solution of the interesting problem which these striking contrasts presented. Such an investigation would have acquainted him with the story of the Great Rebellion of 1861-5, and with the stirring political events that led to the withdrawal of the Southern states under an avowed constitutional right and by the act of secession.

It is not purposed in this narrative, however, to review the political creed or career of the dead Southern chief or his followers. Nor will it be

attempted to belittle the renown of soldiers like Lee or Jackson, nor to dim the splendor of Southern valor so conspicuously displayed, and, alas! so deplorably wasted upon a thousand battle-fields. It is rather sought to submit the honest and candid review by an untitled Union Volunteer of a series of events in many of which he participated. He will deal with that pathetic chapter of the Rebellion which treats of the Union prisoners of war, and the relation of Jefferson Davis thereto. He will present a glimpse—a description is not possible—of their unexampled sufferings in military prisons in the South, and show in how great a measure their heroic sacrifices and devotion through a fearful ordeal, hastened the overthrow of the rebellion, and earned them the veneration of their country.

A committee in Congress, after an exhaustive inquiry into the subject, declared but recently that “The treatment of the Union prisoners by the rebel authorities must be considered in the light of history the most cruel and inhuman known among civilized people in modern times.” In support of this we are not compelled to rely on the testimony of the sufferers or their friends. The flood of testimony that proves the fearful iniquity of Andersonville, Florence, Richmond, Salisbury and Belle Isle leaves an honest doubt unhappily impossible. The facts stand proven even without the evidence of a single Union soldier who has survived a confinement in those dreadful pens of cruelty, pestilence, and death.



It is not unnoticed that there is a numerous and respectable class of our people who, from mixed motives, are opposed to the public discussion of this subject at this time. A class at the North profess to regard its ventilation as impolitic, arguing that it will tend to kindle anew the sectional passions and prejudices engendered by the Civil War and delay a return of the fraternal concord so essential to assure the peace and permanence of the Union. The Southern wing of this class who took part in or actively sympathized with the "lost cause" are naturally desirous that their fallen leaders shall pose in history as defeated patriots in a righteous cause who yielded only after a mighty defense to superior force, and that their cause and its leaders shall have a respectable if not heroic sepulchre.

Fully appreciating the motives that inspire the opposition of these worthy people to a recapitulation of this phase of our war annals, the writer who spent twenty months in six military prisons in the South cannot, in the light of his experience then and his observations since, concur in their conclusion, nor indorse their method of insuring sectional harmony, that most devoutly wished-for consummation.

If a reason is sought for shedding all possible light on the history of Southern prisons while a part of the captives as well as of their guards yet survive, that reason is at hand. The shelves of our public libraries are already bending beneath the weight of Southern books, pamphlets and printed addresses,

all uniting in a chorus of denial of the atrocities in Southern prisons, notwithstanding the clear and positive evidence with which both the survivors and the guards of those places have overwhelmed them.

The "Southern Historical Society," under the management of ex-Confederates, has been especially active in collecting and publishing the essays of Southern writers on the subject of these military prisons. These authors have labored with a patience that is heroic, and with sophistry that is hopeless, to secure an acquittal of those who are charged with the fearful responsibility for Andersonville's appalling cruelties.

Pollard, in his "Lost Cause," whistles the charges of systematic cruelties down the wind. Jefferson Davis, in his book "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," pronounces the dreadful indictment a malignant fiction of the North. He boldly justifies the meditated slaughter of twelve hundred Union officers by the powder mine under Libby Prison in 1864, when the gallant Colonel Ulric Dahlgren made his daring but ill-fated attempt at their deliverance; and when that intrepid young Pennsylvanian fell at the head of his daring little band, Jefferson Davis permitted the ghoulisn mutilation and insult to the body of Dahlgren almost in sight of his own window. The infamy was fittingly crowned by burying the dead and dreaded leader in a grave concealed from his father and mother with malignant care until a Union man, Mr. Lohman, who

was a witness of the night burial, removed the remains to the farm of Mr. Richard Orrick, ten miles from Richmond, where they were hidden until the Confederacy fell and Davis was a fugitive from the Nation's righteous wrath.

Jefferson Davis selected as his chief agent for the torture of Union prisoners the inhuman John H. Winder, whom he describes as a "humane and Christian soldier," and Wirz, the Andersonville monster, as a typical martyr in a holy cause and a sanctified victim of Yankee vengeance. He denounces the shocking flood of evidence given in the Wirz trial in 1865 by the survivors of Andersonville; the sworn testimony of Confederate officers, guards and surgeons, Southern citizens, Catholic priests, Protestant ministers; the terrible confirmation of their statements by a joint committee of Congress; the report of the United States Sanitary Commission, and the verdict of the most skilled surgeons and physicians of the time in our country, as "worthless romances," maliciously designed to justify a harsh political control of the South, to malign its chosen leaders and "fire the Northern heart" against the Southern people.

Scores of ex-Confederates less eminent have, in books, newspapers and essays, labored for a generation, and are laboring yet with unabated industry to disprove the dreadful charges of inhuman cruelty to Federal captives. They vainly seek by ingenious pleas of poverty to excuse or mitigate the crime of

starving as well as freezing Union soldiers to death at Andersonville, Salisbury and Belle Isle. These efforts not only to acquit Jefferson Davis of criminal responsibility, but to exalt him and his deeds, have been boldly aided in speeches by ex-Confederates in both houses of Congress, by orators in political campaigns and on the lecture platform.

It is within recent memory that an ex-Confederate, who occupied successively the positions of United States senator, cabinet officer, and justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, solemnly declared Davis to be a pure patriot, destined and deserving to be revered like Washington, Lincoln and Grant. It is but recently that the "fallen chief" made a triumphal "progress" through the South, and almost in sight of the fourteen thousand graves of the Union victims of Andersonville he was hailed with an enthusiasm and courted with an adulation that resembled the "progress" of Charles the Second from Dover to London at the time of the Restoration.

Such, then, are a few of the reasons that justify, if they do not render imperative, a candid resumé of the facts in the history of Southern prisons and the public relation of Mr. Davis to them.

No reasoning person will expect that a full and comprehensive history of those prisons could be given within the limits of a single essay, nor indeed embraced within the covers of a single volume, for such a task would comprise the experience of an un-

armed army outnumbering the host that Lee led against Meade at Gettysburg.

It will answer the purposes of the present to give the more essential and marked features of that portion of our Civil War records.



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# Bastiles of the Confederacy

## CHAPTER I.

### *The Exchange Controversy.*

**D**URING the first year of the war no formal agreement for an exchange of prisoners existed, captives being exchanged by mutual consent of opposing commanders. But as the operations of the armies on both sides extended, the necessity for a better method became so apparent that, on the 22d of July, 1862, a cartel of exchange was drawn up and agreed upon by General John A. Dix, and General D. H. Hill, representing the respective belligerents. By its terms all prisoners of war were to be discharged on parole in ten days after their capture, and the prisoners then held and those subsequently taken were to be conveyed to the points mutually agreed upon at the expense of the capturing party. The surplus prisoners on one side or the other, who were not exchanged, were not permitted, by this agreement, to go back to service until declared

exchanged. The provisions of the instrument were to remain binding on each party during the war.

The cardinal idea of this contract was that all prisoners should be delivered within ten days after their capture; then if the opposing party had an equal number of prisoners in their hands, an exchange was to be made. Thus the discharged or released men were not necessarily exchanged until so declared under the terms of the cartel.

Aikin's landing, on the James River, thirty miles from Richmond, and Vicksburg, on the Mississippi, were the first points chosen for the delivery of prisoners under flag of truce. General Lorenzo Thomas was the first Federal Commissioner of Exchange, and Judge Robert Ould acted in a like capacity for the Confederates.

For a year after the cartel was agreed upon, exchanges progressed without any serious friction, the excess of captures during that period being somewhat in favor of the Confederates. But the captures made by the Union commanders at Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Port Hudson in July, 1863, turned the tide and left a large surplus in Union hands.

Various causes of dissatisfaction had been fermenting on both sides for many months, but now developed into a more serious rupture. Charges of

bad faith and violations of the cartel began to be passed between the belligerents through the commissioners. These unfortunate disagreements, after persistent efforts to adjust them, culminated at last in an entire cessation of the exchange, and their essential points will be now referred to.

In the spring of 1863 Colonel A. D. Streight with a mounted brigade set forth on an extended raid into Northern Alabama, by order of General Rosecrans, then in command in Tennessee. This force, after doing much damage by destroying bridges, railroad tracks and military stores, penetrated as far as Rome, Ga., where it was overpowered and compelled to accept terms of surrender by the Confederates under General N. B. Forrest. It happened that a number of negroes had followed Streight's column from Alabama, and these being captured with him were turned over by Forrest to the State authorities. Streight and his officers were paroled and furnished a copy of the terms of surrender, which stipulated for their exchange "as soon as practicable."

The Richmond authorities, however, refused to approve of the terms granted by Forrest, and Colonel Ludlow, who was now the Federal commissioner of exchange, was informed that Streight and his officers

were to be returned to Alabama in compliance with a requisition made by Governor Shorter, in order that they might be tried by the State courts there for abducting slaves.

About this time one hundred Confederate officers were brought, under flag of truce, to City Point for exchange, but there being no equivalent for them at Richmond except Streight and his officers, and the release of these being refused for the reasons stated, the boat returned with the Confederates to Fortress Monroe, and Streight and his officers were confined in Libby Prison.

This was, of course, an absurd display of "buncombe" on the part of Governor Shorter, and a direct violation of the terms of the cartel by the Richmond authorities.

For some different but equally frivolous reason the Confederates refused to release the officers of General Milroy's command, who had been taken at Winchester about the middle of June, 1863—Davis having so specially directed in a proclamation.

Another violation of the cartel occurred in the following manner: A number of small Federal parties, foragers, stragglers, and the like, had been captured at various times and places by small "independent" commands under Mosby, Imboden,

Ferguson, McNeil, Morgan, and Quantrel, and paroled at the places of capture to avoid the trouble and expense of conveying them to the points of exchange specified in the cartel. This was a violation of contract; but nevertheless these "paroles" were regularly charged against the Federal authorities, who promptly and rightfully ordered the men thus improperly released back to duty.

A still more glaring violation followed when the whole force of Pemberton taken by Grant at Vicksburg were at once restored to active service in the Confederate army.

Another flagrant disregard of the cartel and infraction of the usages of war was the detention, as prisoners, of citizens, army surgeons, and chaplains, many of these having been taken in Lee's Pennsylvania campaign.

By a proclamation of Davis issued after negro enlistments had begun at the North, it was ordered that runaway slaves who had enlisted in the Federal army should not, if captured, be recognized as soldiers, but should be returned to their former masters through the State authorities. The white officers commanding negro troops, when taken, were treated with every form of indignity that malice could devise, at Libby, Charleston, and other prisons.

The colored soldiers of the gallant Colonel Shaw's 54th Massachusetts regiment, taken in the assault on Fort Wagner, were locked up in the Charleston jail with murderers, thieves, and like malefactors. A large number of Federal officers were at different times and places, and on the most trivial pretexts, placed in close confinement, subjected to harsh and unusual treatment, and held as hostages for regularly convicted Confederate spies in Federal prisons.

Major Nathan Goff, of West Virginia, who was held prisoner at Libby for a time, was taken thence and closely confined as a hostage for one Major Armsey, a Confederate whose home was in the same county as that of Goff. Some time in 1863 Armsey returned in citizen's clothes to his native place, and at once proceeded to enlist recruits clandestinely inside the Federal lines for the Confederate army. He was recognized, apprehended, tried, and condemned as a spy, and in strict accordance with military law was sentenced to be hanged. This sentence, however, was commuted by President Lincoln to fifteen years' solitary confinement at Fort Delaware. It need scarcely be added that Major Goff, who was then very young, had violated no provision whatever of military law, but being of a loyal family of wealth and high social standing in the



midst of secessionists, was singled out for special ill-treatment, in too evident obedience to local enemies at his home. As Secretary of the Navy under President Hayes, as an honored and able representative in Congress since, if not as the present rightful Governor of his State, the name of this gallant soldier and gentleman of West Virginia commands to-day a National respect.

Major Harry White, of the 67th Pennsylvania, who had been captured at Winchester in June, 1863, was subjected to all conceivable forms of petty persecution, and his name excluded with malignant care from several lists of officers marked for exchange in that year, for the acknowledged reason that he had been elected a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate, which body was then politically a tie, and needed his vote to give the "war party" a majority. He was removed from Libby Prison and on Christmas day, 1863, was placed in solitary confinement in Salisbury, N. C., where he was held until the following year, when he fortunately escaped to the Federal lines at Knoxville, Tenn.

At another time General Neal Dow, of Maine, was removed from Libby and placed in solitary confinement at Pensacola, Fla.; but after a time he was returned to Richmond, without ever learning why he

had been treated with this special mark of the Confederate officials' displeasure.

In the summer of 1863 Captain Henry W. Sawyer, of the 1st New Jersey Cavalry, and Captain John Flynn, of the 51st Indiana Infantry, both prisoners at Libby, were condemned by lottery to be hanged, and under circumstances so peculiarly dramatic and interesting as to call for narration in some detail here.

One day in the spring of 1863 two mounted men in the uniform and equipment of Federal captains appeared at a fortified Union camp in East Tennessee and presented an order from the War Department at Washington commanding them to make a careful survey of the post and an immediate report as to the number and condition of the troops present, the character of the earthworks, and the general facilities for defense in case of assault.

In obedience to this order the colonel then in command of the post received the messengers courteously and afforded them every possible facility for the performance of their duty. Having made full and careful drafts of the breastworks, and sketched their surrounding exposures, they dined with their obliging host, who gave them all further verbal information they sought, thanked him for his courtesy, mounted their horses and departed.

It chanced that at this very moment General James H. Wilson rode up to the tent, and casually glancing at the two officers leaving, and thinking vaguely that he recognized in one of them a former acquaintance whom he could not place, inquired carelessly of the colonel the names of his visitors. In answer the War Department's order was handed him, and this he proceeded to read with an interest that soon increased to suspicion, and, finally convinced that all was not right, he directed that the two men, who had now a good start on their return journey, should be overtaken and returned to his presence for further inquiry as to their mission and identity.

A small but well-armed squadron was instantly mounted, and advancing rapidly by a parallel road, the two men were soon intercepted and informed that their immediate return to the camp was desired by General Wilson, who awaited them. Their protests were vigorous, but as they were informed that these orders were not debatable, and as a successful resistance was not possible, they sullenly accompanied their escort back to headquarters. The men were sharply interrogated by General Wilson; but they calmly reiterated their previous statements to the colonel, and pointed with cool dignity to the order of the

War Department in confirmation of their authority and identity.

General Wilson, confronting the man whom he first recognized, asked him directly if he was not so-and-so (calling him by name), whom he had known at a certain time prior to the war, at West Point, and if he was not now an officer of the Confederate army, and his companion also. The officer with emphasis answered, "No;" whereupon General Wilson stepped quickly to his side, and, without ceremony, drew the officer's sword half-way out of the scabbard, and behold, upon the blade was the name by which the General had addressed him, and under it the tell-tale initials, "C. S. A."

Further denial was useless, and was not attempted; the men were disarmed and placed under a strong guard, and a full and immediate inquiry respecting the prisoners and their alleged mission was wired to Washington. Secretary of War Stanton promptly replied, pronouncing the purported order a forgery, and directing the immediate trial of the men who had presented it.

A court-martial was at once convened, composed of officers of the post. The evidence was clear and conclusive, a verdict of guilty was unanimously rendered, and in conformity with the stern military law

and usages of war relating to spies, the bold but unlucky adventurers were hanged the next morning. Both were men of uncommon intelligence and high courage, and when the tragic ending of their mission was announced in Richmond, where each had wide social and official influence, their execution was fiercely denounced as a high-handed Yankee outrage. The Confederate authorities, filled with savage resentment, at once decided upon a summary measure of retaliation.

A few days later the commandant at Libby Prison summoned into one of the lower rooms of the prison all the Federal captives "of the rank of captain." Many of the prisoners, fondly hoping that this unusual summons betokened their exchange, fell into close ranks and were boisterously merry.

But an ominous silence ensued as they looked into the colorless face of the Confederate officer as he opened with a nervous hand an official-looking document and proceeded to read it in a voice that revealed his strong agitation. It was an order from his superior, General John H. Winder, commanding that, "by direction of the Confederate Secretary of War," two Federal captains should be drawn by lot from among those now present for immediate execution, this measure having been decided upon in

retaliation for the "lawless execution" of two Confederate officers in Tennessee by the Federal commander of that department. The method of the drawing was with grim courtesy left to the captives present who were now to take their chances in the lottery of death.

The suppressed but intense emotion caused by the reading of this unlooked for decree was easily traced in the blanched faces of the bravest there, and the depth and direction of each soldier's thoughts at this solemn moment can be left to conjecture; it can be witnessed and remembered now like many episodes of prison life, but not described.

The full name, rank and command of each man was plainly written on white ballots, cast into a hat, and shaken up. There was now a painful hesitation. No one present could be persuaded to perform the hateful but imperative duty of drawing the ballots that were to mark two of their comrades for an ignominious and immediate death. But the duty must be done, as delay could not be allowed, and at last, at the urgent and united request of the prisoners, an aged Union chaplain then in Libby was induced to make the drawing.

The venerable man, with his eyes bandaged and with a silent and fervent prayer on his lips, drew

forth the first ballot; and the Confederate officer, amid the stillness of death, announced the name of Captain Henry W. Sawyer as the first victim, and the next slip bore the name of Captain John Flynn.

The doomed men received the announcement of their fate with the composure that became brave soldiers. They were taken to a small, dark cell in the middle cellar, to there await their execution, which was to take place within a few days, and the rest of the officers were sent back to their former quarters; and with heavy hearts and solemn faces, as they thought of the tidings that would soon be borne to two Northern homes.

It chanced that on the following day Bishop Lynch, of South Carolina, arrived in Richmond on some mission of his office, and among the items of local news he read the notice of the impending execution of Sawyer and Flynn; and casually learning that the latter was a member of his church, his sad situation, and indeed the situation of both the condemned men so awakened his benevolent interest, that he resolved to exert his influence with Jefferson Davis, with whom he was on terms of cordial friendship, in the hope of obtaining—if not a commutation of the death-sentence—at least a reprieve for ten days longer, to afford the men that brief season of preparation for death.

Despite the good Bishop's powerful influence and merciful intercession, Davis remained immovable, and the execution of the two men was fixed to take place the next day at Camp Lee, near Richmond, the usual place for military executions. Both men wrote tender messages of farewell to their loved ones, and at an early hour next morning they left their cells, and mounting horses—the death-sentence having been first read to them — they proceeded, under a strong mounted guard, toward the place of execution.

Few words were exchanged by the prisoners or guards as the solemn procession advanced; the silence among the sober-visaged men — guards and prisoners — was painful, and already they were near the fatal ground when an officer, overtaking them on horseback, rode to the head of the escort and handed the officer in charge a paper.

Ordinarily so common and trifling an occurrence as this would scarcely have attracted remark, but this sudden arrival, at a moment when the men's nerves were strained to a high tension, sent a visible current of excitement through the ranks, and awakened unutterable interest in the breasts of the condemned men. But their hearts beat faster yet, and a wild gleam of hope thrilled them as they saw the commanding officer open and read the paper with





"Handed the Officer in charge a paper."—See page 14.



a visible flush of satisfaction. He saluted and dismissed the messenger with a few inaudible words, and giving the command "right about!" the squadron, without receiving any explanation as to the nature of the message, save that which their imagination could invent out of the incident just witnessed, began a brisk return in the direction of Richmond. The news was soon given to Sawyer and Flynn; the joyful tidings moistened their eyes.

Davis at the last moment had thought it wise to yield to the appeal of Bishop Lynch and give the men ten days more of life, determined as he was upon their final execution. The men were returned to their cell in Libby to wait for the good or ill fortune that their short respite might bring, and neither of them forgot Bishop Lynch in their prayers that night.

The facts were reported to General Butler at Fortress Monroe, and were by him swiftly transmitted to Washington. The case was discussed in Cabinet meeting, and aroused deep indignation at the North. Mr. Stanton was authorized to place the matter in the hands of General Butler, "with full power," and Butler acted with characteristic promptness and vigor. He politely notified the Confederate authorities at Richmond, and without argument, that on

the same day and hour that Captains Sawyer and Flynn should be executed, he would hang General W. H. F. Lee and Captain Winder, both of whom were then his prisoners at Fortress Monroe. The former was a nephew of General R. E. Lee, the latter a son of Jefferson Davis' particular friend John H. Winder, Commissary General of Federal prisoners.

The checkmate was superb and complete. The sacrifice of two Confederate officers thus powerfully related could not be well indulged in, as the sagacious Butler knew with exasperating precision, even to gratify the imperious humor of "the President"; and thus Sawyer and Flynn were saved in the very shadow of the gallows.

When General Butler was made Commissioner of Exchange, the Confederate Commissioner was directed not to recognize or communicate with him, because Mr. Davis had, with great solemnity, declared him an "outlaw" by proclamation, because of the General's rigorous government of New Orleans in 1862. The Confederates soon saw the folly of this step, however, and escaped general ridicule by an early and sensible retreat. Judge Ould admits with candor, that of all the Federal representatives with whom he came in contact in the exchange negotiations, General Butler was the most truthful and just,

and gratefully testifies to his personal courtesy to him and his humane treatment of Confederate prisoners.

During the month of July, 1863, Judge Ould submitted a proposal for a general exchange, a condition being that the surplus held by either party should be released on parole; but as the proposal did not suggest a satisfactory remedy for the grievances that were the main grounds of Federal dissatisfaction, it was rejected, a large excess of prisoners being at this time in Union hands.

Meantime the prisons at Richmond and elsewhere were being rapidly overflowed; the ratio of deaths rose to an alarming degree, and sickness and suffering increased daily among the unfortunate captives, as the full blaze of midsummer beat on them with dreadful power.

Having thus noted the chief causes with which the Federal authorities justified their refusal to continue the exchange, justice demands that the Confederate side of the question should be presented in its material points. This indeed has been attempted by many Southern writers with more zeal and rhetoric than accuracy. But Judge Ould, whose position as Commissioner of Exchange afforded him more than any other an acquaintance with the facts on the

Confederate side of the case, has presented it in an ingenious and attractive narrative published some years since in the *Philadelphia Weekly Times*. In this he directs attention to General Orders Nos. 59 and 100, issued by the Federal War Department in 1863, which provided that "no paroles unaccompanied by actual possession and delivery at the points designated in the cartel would be recognized," but declared further that "if a parole should be given under different circumstances, and the United States did not approve of the same, the paroled officer must return into captivity."

He also refers to General Order No. 207, issued at Washington July 3d, 1863, which declared that "all captures must be reduced to actual possession, and all prisoners of war must be delivered at the place designated, there to be exchanged, or paroled until exchange can be effected." This general order did not contain the provision of the others, that the paroled officer, if he gave an unauthorized parole, should "return into captivity."

"The application of these general orders to the facts connected with exchanges," Judge Ould says, "produced the first serious difficulty." He admits that the position assumed in these general orders "may have been strongly supported by the language

of the cartel," which required "all prisoners of war to be discharged on parole in ten days after capture, and the prisoners now held, and those hereafter taken, to be transported to the points mutually agreed upon at the expense of the capturing party;" but claims that the *practice* up to May, 1863, had been for both parties to recognize paroles given at the time and place of capture. He contended that the cartel touched only—so far as deliveries were concerned—such prisoners as were in captivity, or held by either party in depots or military prisons, and had been removed from the battlefield or place of capture and reduced into actual possession, and that it still left the force and effect of military paroles to be interpreted by the usages of war; that there often arose contingencies in which a prisoner might give a valid parole without violating the manifest purpose or language of the cartel; and instances a parole given Colonel Leroy Stone, of the 149th Pennsylvania Volunteers, captured at Gettysburg, who, being wounded, and unaware of the existence of the general order (207) issued on the day of his capture, accepted the parole to avoid a painful journey to the rear.

The existence of this general order was unknown, in fact, to the most of the army; or at least was un-

known to the subordinate Confederate commanders at the time; for the writer, who was wounded and captured at Gettysburg, in the second day's action, was present with a column of captured Federal officers at Fairfield Gap, on the 5th of July, when a parole of these prisoners was already in progress, when an order countermanding it was received by Major Fairfax, of Longstreet's staff.

Lee's wagon train, seventeen miles long, encumbered the roads, and the care of several thousand prisoners greatly increased the difficulty of his retreat across the Blue Ridge to the Potomac; a fierce rain storm had set in on the 4th, and continuing all night had made the mountain roads almost impassable. Hagerstown and Williamsport seemed floating in lakes of mud.

The Federal authorities insisted that the provisions of the latest General Order (207) should be retroactive, and hence that paroles given at the time and place of capture should, notwithstanding previous practice, be inoperative. It was claimed by the Confederates that the execution of this order unfairly deprived them of the advantage of many captures made by them during the preceding four months, and, therefore, they refused assent to this arrangement, but proposed, instead, that previous practice



should be operative up to the date of the order's issue.

Finding that the Federal commissioner was immovable respecting the class of paroles mentioned, Judge Ould informed the Federal commissioner that he need not send any more Confederate officers to City Point with the expectation of receiving as equivalents only those who were in captivity, *i. e.*, those officers of Streight's and Milroy's commands then in Libby, and the officers taken at Gettysburg, and closed his letter in these words: "If captivity, privation and misery are to be the fate of officers on both sides hereafter, let God judge between us. I have struggled in this matter as if it had been a matter of life and death with me. I am heartsick at the termination, but I have no self-reproaches."

"The inevitable effect of the new rule," says Judge Ould, "would be to confine exchanges to the officers and men who were in captivity, leaving the surplus in prison, and would, therefore, have directly ignored the terms of the cartel."

Touching colored Federal soldiers, he elsewhere makes the remarkable observation that no officer of the Federal army during the progress of the war was ever punished in any way for commanding or leading negro troops, though the Confederates had

many such in captivity. For a man occupying the position he did at the time, this denial displays a lack of information that is startling, to use no harsher term; for the fact that this class of Federal officers was singled out and specially ill-treated in nearly all the Southern prisons is so well known to hundreds of surviving witnesses, North and South, that it seems like absurdity to cite instances. The writer will, however, venture to present one instance which occurred while he was confined at Libby Prison with over a thousand Union officers in 1863-4. At that time no prisoners were detained there save commissioned officers, except occasionally for a single night while in transit to other prisons where enlisted men were held.

A small apartment about twelve feet square was specially constructed at the north end of the kitchen, and here several white officers were locked in with a number of negro privates who had been captured under their command. A thousand officers had daily access to this "kitchen," and from it all could see through cracks the inmates of the small apartment, but were forbidden by Turner, the prison commandant, to talk with them.

Perhaps Judge Ould does not rate this a "punishment." And does he invite us to believe, then,

that the Confederates went to the trouble and expense of building this apartment and placing special sentinels at the door in order to give greater seclusion and comfort to this class of prisoners than to their brother officers?

Again he says that "the Confederate law which authorized the delivery of negro soldiers to the State authorities was never enforced, but was to be regarded at the time as legislation '*in terrorem*,' and hence did not present any 'practical difficulty.'" Would he also ask us to believe that it would not have been enforced, like the sentence of Sawyer and Flynn, if the Federal authorities had not had the means at hand to frustrate it by Butler's vigorous remedy?

He relates a three days' visit to Fortress Monroe, where he and General Butler agreed upon a practical return to and compliance with the main provisions of the cartel of 1862, and proposed to "flank" the single point of disagreement relating to the captured negro slaves who had fled from their masters and enlisted in the Federal army by leaving the future adjustment of such cases to such measures of retaliation as might be found practicable and expedient, and declared that he had now the authority and desire to sign the new agreement in that shape.

General Butler, however, refused to sign until the proposal should be submitted to his Government for approval; and as this was not obtained, the deadlock continued, and Judge Ould returned to his lines.

General Grant, to whom the Government a year afterwards referred the matter, refused to assent to a general exchange under existing circumstances, and in a letter to General Butler, said: "If we begin a system of exchange now that liberates all prisoners, we shall have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. Whereas, if we hold on to those now in our hands, they count for no more than dead men. It is hard on our soldiers to keep them in Southern prisons, but it is mercy to those left in the field to fight our battles."

It would be tedious and unprofitable to recapitulate the details of the exchange controversy that followed the events above narrated during the blazing summer and unusually severe winter that ensued. Enough to say that new grievances were vigilantly hunted and found on both sides, and the prisoners' wild hopes of liberation died in their despairing souls. About one hundred thousand prisoners were, at the date of General Grant's letter, held on both sides, a great majority of these being in Federal hands.

When it is borne in mind that Lee's army was at this time struggling for the life of the Confederacy in the Petersburg trenches, and that Grant was daily tightening his grasp upon it, and that Hood was striving with a disheartened and already defeated army to check the victorious advance of Sherman before Atlanta; and when it is remembered that the Confederate prisoners at the North were well sheltered, fed, and fit for immediate service with Lee's and Hood's depleted forces, to strengthen which the Confederacy had already "robbed the cradle and the grave"; and when it is finally borne in memory that at this critical time not one in fifty of the emaciated Union captives at Andersonville, Macon, Salisbury and Richmond could more than barely stand upon their feet—much less march and fight for many months, if indeed ever afterwards—the earnest, almost pathetic appeals of the Confederate authorities for an exchange on almost any terms will not excite surprise, nor will the decision of General Grant, deeply as it is known to have wrung his generous heart to leave for a time the unfortunate Union prisoners to the mercy of merciless keepers like Winder, Wirz and the Turners, lessen the country's confidence in his sagacity nor dim the lustre of his patriotism and fame.

While there were other minor causes of disagreement besides those enumerated, it is believed that the foregoing statement embraces the essential causes that resulted in the cessation of exchanges in the midsummer of 1863, and in this form it is submitted for impartial judgment.

However honest minds may divide on the merits of the unhappy dispute, they must unite in the acknowledgment that the prisoners themselves were the victims and not the authors of the quarrel that proved the forerunner of the most gigantic and hideous crime that ever stained the annals of Christendom.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Cruelty and Confiscation—Bullets and Bloodhounds.*

FROM the time of this deplorable disagreement in regard to exchanges, in the summer of 1863, until a month prior to the surrender of Lee, the military prisons at Andersonville, Salisbury, Belle Isle and Florence were the scenes of torment, cruelty and death in such forms and excess as to defy a portrayal by the historian's pen or the painter's brush. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Andersonville stockade, swarming at one time in 1864 with thirty-five thousand Federal prisoners, witnessed cruelties and sufferings that transcended in studied and systematic barbarity the devilish inventions of the Spanish Inquisition, the terrors of the French Revolution, and all the dread tempests of war that have swept over Europe since the Crusades.

At Belle Isle, in the James river opposite Richmond, the situation of the captives was pitiful during

the winter of 1863-4, which was the most rigorous known in that latitude for many years, freezing the James so solidly that teams with heavy loads crossed easily on the ice to and from the Richmond shore. The area of the Island was about one hundred acres, and the prisoners, varying from one to ten thousand in number, were hemmed in by guards on its bleakest part, most of them without shelter, and but a few found partial shelter in ragged tents. Eight men froze to death in the ditch that skirted one side of the camp. They had crawled into it to escape the cruel blasts of a winter night. One hundred and twenty-three perished from cold there that winter.

In this, as well as in all the other prisons, all money and articles of intrinsic value, and even such articles of clothing as their captors fancied, were taken from them, the Confederate officials having in their hands at one time, fifty-five thousand dollars belonging to the starving and freezing men on Belle Isle.

By an arrangement between the Exchange Commissioners, an amount of blankets and clothing was sent them by the U. S. Sanitary and Christian Commissions through the Government, but hundreds had perished from exposure before this relief reached them.



The food dealt out to them—chiefly cornmeal from which the husk had not been removed—was so scant in quantity and wretched in quality, that the whole crowd of ragged and shivering wretches were made half insane by the ceaseless pangs of hunger and the varied diseases to which it led. The dog belonging to the Confederate commandant straying into the camp one day was killed and eaten with eager zest. Because the wagons bearing their daily supply of rations met with an accident on one occasion, the prisoners were deprived of their food that day, nor was the loss ever replaced. While these scenes were passing daily at Belle Isle, the Confederate capitol where the Southern Congress met, and the house of Jefferson Davis were within sight of the Union sufferers.

Boxes sent to the Union officers confined in Libby Prison that winter by friends at the North were brought from the flag of truce boat at City Point and stored, thousands in number and for months, in Kerr's warehouse, in full sight and within fifty feet of Libby Prison, from whose east windows the famishing owners could plainly read their names on the covers. These boxes contained both food and clothing, books and such God-sends as the love of wives, sisters and parents could thoughtfully suggest

and their purse supply. The Confederate agent had received them under a flag of truce, and by the agreement had pledged the honor of himself and his government to their inviolate and prompt delivery; yet the shameful truth must be recorded, that but a portion of those boxes ever reached the hands of the owners, and most of these were plundered before delivery of their most valuable articles, both food and clothing. The rest of the stored boxes were leisurely appropriated by the Confederate officials and soldiers, who had free access to them day and night.

A box sent from home to the writer in January, 1864, was robbed of its entire contents, and to refine the theft a written list was left in the bottom to remind him of the treasures he had missed. In order to get the empty box for a seat—a luxury in Libby—he was laughingly told by “Dick” Turner that he “must sign for it;” he did so, to save his keepers that trouble, and the following day Turner sent a file of guards up stairs *and took away the box.*

On the entrance of the writer to the prison from Gettysburg, where his eye was destroyed by a wound, he was brutally struck in the face, which was still bandaged and inflamed, by this same Turner, who, having pilfered his pockets of everything else, struck

this brave blow as a reply to the writer's request to be permitted to retain a small fragment of shell which had wounded one of his comrades at Gettysburg.

A parting testimony of his regard was paid in February, 1864, when he locked him up among the rats in an underground cell, without covering or light, for his participation in the famous tunnel escape, it being his ill-fortune to be re-captured after getting thirteen miles from Richmond.

Another box sent to him from home in 1864 was found still in storage with thousands of others in Richmond when the Union army entered the city, and was expressed to him in New York by General Mumford, in August, 1865, twenty-one months after the Confederates had received it. It would have indeed been joyfully welcomed, with its edibles, clothing and shoes, for while it was withheld from him he was on the verge of starvation and was shivering in the filthy tatters of a summer uniform, and with frozen, swollen and shoeless feet, in an unsheltered, open field, with twelve hundred famishing Union officers at Camp Sorghum, near Columbia.

This shameful breach of faith and inhuman deprivation prevailed in all the chief prisons at the South, with a few honorable exceptions, and was a piece of the general "system" that had been

deliberately decided upon at Richmond in the treatment of prisoners, and with the desperate and despicable purpose of bringing the Federal authorities to terms, and meanwhile insidiously disable the army of captives in their hands for future service in the field, should any portion of it survive the infamous operation of the "system."

The two prisons, Camp Sorghum and Camp Asylum, at Columbia, S. C., where the Federal officers were confined during the winter of 1864-5, were scenes of shameful cruelties, the captives suffering dreadfully from the beggarly allowance of shelter, fuel and food. Near Camp Sorghum a citizen was employed by the keepers to track, with bloodhounds, prisoners who had escaped, and several men were dreadfully injured by them. One officer was so badly torn by these savage beasts that he soon died. Two of the dogs strolled into the camp one day and were killed while their owner was in the commandant's tent arranging for another chase of Federal fugitives. The infuriated owner was allowed the revenge of casting the carcasses of the beasts into the stream outside the guard line by the sympathizing commandant. This was the only water accessible to the prisoners.



See page 32.



A group of officers were one night singing the "Star Spangled Banner" in the centre of the camp, when a sentinel deliberately fired into them and killed an officer.

During a roll-call one day a guard who was to be on duty that night proposed to a Rhode Island captain that for a consideration of fifty dollars in greenbacks and his watch he would allow him to approach his beat at a given signal, about eleven o'clock, and, after handing him these valuables, he would be permitted to escape unmolested. At the hour designated the officer, in answer to the promised signal, advanced and handed the demanded price of his liberty to his tempter, who pocketed his wages and shot the giver dead. For this achievement the warrior was allowed to keep his spoils, and was furloughed and promoted.

Another guard on the same post, envious of his comrade's laurels, shot and killed Lieutenant Turbain, of the 66th New York, within a few yards of where the writer was standing, and for no other shadow of reason than that the Lieutenant had, in passing around his tiny hut in broad daylight, approached within half a dozen feet of the "dead line," and more than fifty feet from his assassin. The promiscuous firing of shots through the camp was at night

a common and mirth-provoking pastime of the sentinels around this pen of misery.

The prison at Salisbury, N. C., ranked well up with the deadly pen at Andersonville in the variety and excess of its horrors, as well as in the number of its victims, the number of deaths there being twelve thousand, one hundred and twelve. The prison was a brick factory four stories high, 40x100 feet, with five buildings formerly used as boarding-houses. A board fence surrounding these inclosed about five acres, and here in November, 1864, ten thousand prisoners were crowded. The buildings were soon filled with the sick and dying, and within a short time more than half of them perished.

Driven by their sufferings to desperation, the prisoners in November attempted an organized escape by forcing the guard, but a regiment happening at the moment to arrive by a train, the unarmed and emaciated men were soon overpowered, the artillery opening on them with grape and canister, and continuing to fire for some time after the captives had surrendered, while many poor tottering wretches who could take no hand in the break-out were begging for mercy.

In the following month General Winder urgently pressed the Richmond authorities to remove the pris-



oners from Salisbury and Florence to a place of greater security. It may be said with truth and without levity that he was not wholly forgetful of himself, for at this period the ominous reports that were daily reaching him of Sherman's advance did not increase his hours of sleep nor give his dreams of capture by that hard hitter a very rosy tint; and particularly as he remembered now a certain order of his own issued at Andersonville when Sherman had taken Atlanta, and in which order he had commanded that when Sherman's troops should "approach within seven miles of this post [Andersonville] the battery of Florida artillery on duty will open fire on the stockade [prison] without further orders from these headquarters."

Throughout the entire winter the captives suffered intensely from cold at this prison, and at Florence the same deplorable conditions prevailed. The allowance of fuel, of which there was a great abundance close by, was not half sufficient to cook the scant daily rations of coarse meal supplied the men, much less to keep up fires to warm their skeleton and half-naked bodies, and they sank rapidly and died in thousands, as the cold winter blasts swept pitilessly over them.

The pathetic and daily appeals of the sufferers to John H. Gee, the keeper, to allow them to chop and haul wood for themselves under a guard, was met by that unconscionable apology for a soldier with curses and the vilest abuse.

Captain Hall, Confederate Inspector, made a report at the time when this iniquity was at its height at Salisbury, stating that fifty unused horses were standing in the Quartermaster's department stables, with plenty of good timber adjacent to the prison, and also an abundance of straw for which there was no use.

It is quite needless to say that this was but one of the many forms of atrocious cruelty practiced in this counterfeit of Hades under the authority and immediate supervision of John H. Winder, whose headquarters were as near by as the deadly odors of the pen and his personal safety would permit him to venture.

The reader will be glad to be spared the harrowing and almost incredible details of individual suffering inflicted upon the Union captives at this fearful prison; but the references made are truths that will carry conviction to every enlightened and unprejudiced mind as to the undoubted and unholy existence of the "system" that had been hatched at

Richmond in the treatment of Federal prisoners, a plan — revolting and shameful as it was to the commonest instincts of humanity — that was as deliberately studied and approved beforehand as was any campaign of the Civil War.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Evidence Concerning Andersonville.*

SOME of the leading facts, and a necessary few of the illustrative incidents in the history of Andersonville Prison will now be reviewed as briefly as an intelligent conception of the place, its creators and keepers may require, and the means and ability of the writer permit. The facts here submitted are established by evidence adduced at the trial of Captain Henry Wirz, at Washington, in 1865, from official records at Washington and Confederate archives.

The stockade at Andersonville was located in December, 1863, by W. S. Winder, son of General John H. Winder, the agent of the Confederate Government, upon a narrow stream, not more than six feet wide, which had its rise in a swamp. Its banks were marshy and swampy. The water was of a dark color, and when allowed to stand for a short time would deposit in the bottom of the glass a thick, loathsome sediment. Such was the condition of the stream at the time the location of the stockade was decided upon; its condition after it became the sink for the use of the camp will be described elsewhere.



The "Mansions" of Andersonville.



Within half a mile of the stockade ran Little Sweet Water creek, a stream varying from fifteen to twenty-five feet in width. The water in this creek was clear and good, and the land on either side much better adapted for a prison camp than the spot on which it was located.

Major-General J. H. Wilson says of this stream: "The stream here called Little Sweet Water, about fifteen feet in width and five feet deep, runs only about two hundred and fifty feet from the corner of the hospital inclosure. If the main inclosure had been enlarged simply so as to cross that creek, which could have been done very easily, it would have supplied all the troops that could have possibly been put there, with ample water both for culinary purposes and for the purposes of police.

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"The water of the stream which ran through the stockade, naturally unfit for use, was rendered still worse by being made the sewer to carry away the impurities and filth of the prison cook-house, which was located on its banks just above the stockade, the grease and refuse from which covered the stream and floated sluggishly into the limits of the prison. The rebel guards were also encamped on the stream above the cook-house and emptied

their filth into it. Can the mind conceive a greater mockery than this pretense of furnishing water for the prisoners to drink, which, even when used to bathe wounds, often produced gangrene?"

The prison space was surrounded by a high wall, from which the sentinels had a full view of the captives within, and the "dead line," marked by rows of stakes with narrow strips nailed to their tops, followed the wall about fifteen feet from its interior side. When the stockade swarmed with thirty-five thousand men in the summer of 1864, the space for each prisoner was ascertained by actual measurement to be *six square feet*. Artillery bore upon the stockade on three sides from without, and when Winder prepared it for the prisoners he had every tree within cut down.

To afford an idea of the place and the condition of the prisoners, the following extracts are offered from the report of Joseph M. Jones, M.D., Professor of Medical Chemistry in the Medical College of Georgia, at Augusta, who made a thorough inspection of Andersonville prison, under instructions from the Surgeon-General of the so-called Confederate States. He says:

"Scurvy, diarrhoea, dysentery and hospital gangrene were the prevailing diseases. From the crowded condition,



bad diet and dejected, depressed spirits and condition of the men, their systems had become so disordered that the smallest abrasion of the skin from the rubbing of a shoe, or from the effects of the sun, or from the prick of a splinter, or from scratching, or from a mosquito bite, in some cases took on frightful ulceration and gangrene. The long use of salt meat, oftentimes imperfectly cured, as well as the almost total deprivation of vegetables and fruit, appeared to be the chief causes of the scurvy. I carefully examined the bakery and the bread furnished the prisoners, and found that they were supplied almost entirely with corn-bread from which the husk had not been separated. This husk acted as an irritant to the alimentary canal without adding any nutriment to the bread. As far as my examination extended, no fault could be found with the mode in which the bread was baked; the difficulty lay in the failure to separate the husk from the cornmeal.

"I strongly urged the preparation of large quantities of soup made from the cow and calves heads with the brains and tongues, to which a liberal supply of sweet potatoes and vegetables might have been advantageously added. The materials existed in abundance for the preparation of such soup in large quantities with but little additional expense. Such aliment would have been not only highly nutritious, but it would also have acted as an efficient remedial agent for the removal of the scorbutic condition.

"The sick within the stockade lay under several long sheds which were originally built for barracks. These sheds covered two floors, which were open on all sides. The sick lay upon the bare boards, or upon such

ragged blankets as they possessed, without any bedding so far as I observed, or even straw.

"I observed a large pile of cornbread, bones and filth of all kinds, thirty feet in diameter and several feet in height, swarming with myriads of flies, in a vacant space near the pots used for cooking. Millions of flies swarmed over everything and covered the faces of the sleeping patients, and crawled down their open mouths and deposited their maggots in the gangrenous wounds of the living and in the mouths of the dead. Mosquitoes in great numbers also infested the tents, and many of the patients were so stung by these pestiferous insects that they resembled those suffering with a slight attack of measles.

"The flies swarming over the wounds and over filth of every kind, the filthy, imperfectly washed and scanty supply of rags, and the limited supply of washing utensils, the same washbowl serving for scores of patients, were sources of such constant circulation of the gangrenous matter that the disease might rapidly spread from a single gangrenous wound.

"Finally, this gigantic mass of human misery calls loudly for relief, not only for the sake of suffering humanity, but also on account of our own brave soldiers now captives in the hands of the Federal Government. Strict justice to the gallant men of the Confederate armies who have been or may be so unfortunate as to be compelled to surrender in battle demands that the Confederate government should adopt that course which will best secure their health and comfort in captivity; or at least leave their enemies without a shadow of an excuse for any violation of the rules of civilized warfare in the treatment of prisoners."

John C. Bates, acting Assistant Surgeon under the Confederate authorities at Andersonville, testified as follows on the trial of Wirz:

"I reported to Dr. Stevenson, who assigned me to the third division of the military prison under Dr. Shepard; I was assigned to the fifteenth ward as then designated.

"Upon going to the hospital I went immediately to the ward to which I was assigned, and although I am not an over-sensitive man, I must confess I was rather shocked at the appearance of things. The men were lying partially nude, and dying and lousy, a portion of them in the sand and others upon boards which had been stuck up on little props, pretty well crowded together, a majority of them in small tents that were badly worn.

"I got to learn practically the meaning of the term 'lousy;' I would generally find some upon myself after retiring to my quarters; they were so numerous that it was impossible for a surgeon to enter the hospital without having some upon him when he came out. If he touched anybody or anything save the ground, and very often if he stood still merely any length of time, he would get them upon him.

\* \* \* \* \*

"As a general thing the patients were destitute; they were filthy and partly naked; there seemed to be a disposition only to get something to *eat*. The clamor all the while was for something to eat. They asked me for orders for this, that, and the other — peas, or rice, or salt, or beef tea, or a potato, or a biscuit, or a piece of corn-bread, or siftings, or meal.

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“There was in my ward a boy of fifteen or sixteen years in whom I felt a particular interest. My attention was more immediately called to him from his youth, and he appealed to me in such a way that I could not well avoid heeding him. He would often ask me to bring him a piece of bread, a potato, a biscuit, or something of that kind, which I did; I would put them in my pocket and give them to him. I would sometimes give him a raw potato, and as he had the scurvy, and also gangrene, I would advise him not to cook the potato at all but to eat it raw, as an anti-scorbutic. I supplied him in that way for some time, but I could not give him a sufficiency. He became bedridden upon the hips and back, lying upon the ground; we afterwards got him some straw. Those bedridden sores had become gangrenous. He became more and more emaciated—until he died. The lice, the want of bed and bedding, of fuel and food, were the causes of his death.

“I was a little shy. I did not know that I was allowed to take such things to the patients, and I had been so often arrested that I thought it necessary to be a little shy in what I did and keep it to myself. I would put a potato in my pocket and turn around and let it drop to this man or that. I did not wish to be observed by anybody. When I first went there I understood that it was positively against the orders to take anything in.

“I can speak of other cases among the patients. Two or three others in my ward were in the same condition, and there were others who came to their deaths from the bad condition of things and the lack of necessary supplies. That is my professional opinion.

“In visiting the wards in the morning I would find persons lying dead; and sometimes would find them

"Dead among the living."—See page 45.





lying among the living. I recollect on one occasion telling my steward to go and wake up a certain one, and when I went to wake him up myself he was taking his everlasting sleep. Upon several occasions, upon going into my own wards I found men whom we did not expect to die, dead from the sensation of chilblains produced during the night.

"This was in the hospital. I was not so well acquainted with how it was in the stockade. I judge from what I saw that numbers suffered in the same way there. The effect of scurvy as it developed itself upon the systems of the men there was the next thing to rottenness.

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"The miasmatic effluvia emanating from the hospital was very potent and offensive indeed. If I had a scratch on my hand — if the skin was broken or abraded in the least — I did not venture to go into the hospital without protecting it with adhesive plaster. I saw several sores originating from the infection of the gangrenous effluvia saturating the atmosphere. I thought when I was in the stockade that the effluvia was worse there than in the hospital. In the stockade the men were more thickly huddled together like ants or bees or something of that kind. It was a hard matter to get through them. We had some pretty cold weather for Georgia that winter; once or twice I think I saw ice; it was thin, perhaps; we never have much ice there.

"Immediately upon the west side of the stockade, and between there and the depot, there was timber scattered. On the north side, beyond the cook-house a little, there was plenty of timber; on the south side plenty had been

cut in logs and lay there, and down by the hospital there was plenty. That is a woody country, and there was plenty of wood within a mile. It was fine timber, and could have been made into shingles or clapboards. I did not see any of it used to make shelter for the prisoners. *I regret to say that the supply of wood was not sufficient to keep the prisoners from what we term freezing to death."*



## CHAPTER IV.

### *Andersonville—More Evidence.*

SUCH is a small portion of the horrors and needless cruelties revealed in the testimony of Professor Jones and Doctor Bates, both Confederates. Let us now listen to Lieutenant-Colonel D. T. Chandler, Inspector General for the Confederacy, testifying before a committee of Congress appointed to investigate the treatment of prisoners. He says:—

“I was in the service of the Confederate government from February, 1863, until the close of the war. I held the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Adjutant-General’s Department, and latterly was assigned to duty as Inspector General. I was the officer who made the report, signed ‘D. T. Chandler,’ which was read to the Court yesterday. I have no retraction whatever to make in regard to the condition of the prison at Andersonville, as represented in my report. I devoted about a week — something less than a week — to an inspection of that place. The report was based upon information conveyed to me in official communications from General Winder, and the officers of his staff, inspection of the books and papers, the records of the different offices of that post, and actual inspection of the troops, the stockade, and the hospital. I will further state that I had some conversa-

tion with the prisoners in the stockade. I noticed that General Winder seemed very indifferent to the welfare of the prisoners, indisposed to do anything, or to do as much as I thought he ought to do to alleviate their sufferings. I remonstrated with him as well as I could, and he used that language which I reported to the department with reference to it."

"*Question:* What particular language do you allude to?"

"*Answer:* When I spoke of the great mortality existing among the prisoners, and pointed out to him that the sickly season was coming on, and that it must necessarily increase unless something was done for their relief—the swamp, for instance, drained, and proper food furnished them, and in greater quantity, and other sanitary suggestions which I made to him—he replied to me that he thought it was better to let half of them die than to take care of them.

"I would like to state to the court that before he used this language to me, my assistant who was with me, Major Hall, had reported to me that he had used similar language to him. I mention this to show the court that I am not mistaken, that my recollection is clear. My assistant, Major Hall, had reported to me officially that General Winder had used this language in conversation with him about the prisoners. I told him I thought it incredible; that he must be mistaken. He told me no; that he had said it not only once but twice; and, as I have stated, he subsequently made use of this expression to me.

"I think the commissary might have been compelled to purchase some green corn that could have been had

in limited quantities. I think so from consultation with the officers there. I saw plenty of it, and cabbages in limited quantities might have been had. I made an estimate in my report that, exclusive of the swamp and streets, there was left about six square feet to a man within the stockade.

"I urged on the department the removal of General Winder as the radical cause of many of the difficulties there. I believe that with another head of the establishment a good deal might have been done. He had not the inclination to exert himself. I also recommended the removal of the assistant commissary. General Winder was made Commissary General of prisoners after I had made my report.

"On my return to Richmond in October I spoke to Colonel Chilton, Chief of the Bureau, with reference to my report, and he told me it had not yet been acted upon, that it was still on the secretary's desk. I returned again to Richmond the first week in February, and found from the same source that it had not then been acted on. The former secretary had been relieved, and General Breckenridge appointed secretary. At my instance, Colonel Chilton urged the department to take the matter up, for the reason that General Winder had rather denied the correctness of some statements that I made, and I made a counter report, furnishing evidence of the accuracy of my report. I went myself to Judge Campbell, and asked him to take it up, and he promised that he would do it. I do not believe it was ever taken up; that is to say, I do not believe it ever was decided. Judge Campbell might have been considering it at the time of the evacuation.

"I do not pretend to say that I think the President did not know there was a prison at Andersonville, and the condition in which it was; I speak only of my individual report and the accompanying papers.

"The stream that flows through the stockade is formed by two smaller streams that meet some hundred yards, as well as I remember, before entering the stockade. The banks of that stream are hilly, and there were troops, the Georgia reserves, camped on it, and the washings from the camp came down into the stream, and flowed through the stockade. This I pointed out to General Winder as wrong, and before I left there he had moved one regiment, and the other was under orders to move. I made no recommendations with reference to it; the men themselves complained of the stench arising from the vicinity of the stockade. I should think that after General Winder had been made Commissary General of prisoners he reported to the War Department through the Adjutant General. I suppose he was appointed by the Secretary of War. The order was dated War Department, and was signed by the Adjutant General."

While the events described in Colonel Chandler's testimony were transpiring at Andersonville, Confederate officers and citizens of repute, as well as Southern newspapers located near the various prisons throughout the Confederacy, were depicting in letters and articles addressed to Jefferson Davis the deplorable condition of the Federal captives, and begging for the sake of God and humanity, and for the honor

of the Southern people and cause, that the shameful spectacle they were witnessing daily might be removed from human sight and a remedy speedily applied.

In illustration of this fact the following letter addressed to Jefferson Davis, and which was among the captured Confederate archives at Richmond after his flight, will serve as a type of hundreds of other similar appeals:

"STATESBURG, S. C., October 12, 1864.

"TO JEFFERSON DAVIS, President C. S. A.,

"Richmond, Va.

"*Dear Sir:*—Inclosed you will find an account of the terrible sufferings of the Yankee prisoners at Florence, S. C. In the name of all that is holy, is there nothing that can be done to relieve such dreadful suffering? If such things are allowed to continue, they will surely draw down some awful judgment on our country. *It is a most horrible national sin that cannot go unpunished.* If we cannot give them food and shelter, for *God's sake* parole them and send them back to Yankee land, but don't *starve the miserable creatures to death.* Don't think that I have any liking for the Yankee; I have none. Those near and dear to me have suffered too much from their tyranny for me to have anything but *hatred for them*; but I have not yet become quite *brute* enough to know of such suffering without trying to do something *even for a Yankee.* Yours respectfully.

"SABINA DISMUKES."

Mr. Dismukes inclosed in this letter an account printed in the *Sumter Watchman* descriptive of the horrible condition of the Federal prisoners at Florence, S. C., and its receipt in Richmond is shown by Mr. Davis' private secretary's endorsement, and also those of four other officials.

Among the interesting witnesses in the Wirz trial was Ambrose Spencer, a citizen residing during the war about nine miles from Andersonville. A portion of his testimony was as follows:

"I visited Andersonville during its occupation as a prison very frequently. I have seen the prisoner Captain Wirz very frequently. I was there nearly every month during the time it was a prison; I doubt whether a month passed in which I was not there while it was in its crowded condition—every month except, perhaps, during March, 1865. I was at Andersonville constantly—nearly every month, as I have remarked. I had frequent opportunities of seeing the condition of the prisoners, not only from the adjacent hills, but several times on the outside of the stockade where the sentinels' grounds were. I had opportunities of talking at different times with the prisoners, not only at Andersonville, but after they had escaped in several instances, when they came to my house. I can only answer the question by saying that their condition was as wretched and as horrible as could well be conceived, not only from exposure to the sun, the inclemency of the weather, and the cold of the winter, but from the filth, from the absolute degradation which was evident in their condition. I have seen that

stockade after three or four days' rain when the mud, I should say, was twelve inches deep on both the hills. The prisoners were walking or wading through that mud. The condition of the stockade perhaps can be expressed most aptly by saying, that in passing up and down the railroad, if the wind was favorable, the odor from the stockade could be detected at least two miles.

"I believe I am familiar with the surrounding country. That section of Southwestern Georgia is well supplied with mills, both grist-mills, flour-mills and saw-mills. One of them, a large one, is owned by a gentleman named Drew. There are four others of considerable capacity. There is one saw-mill at a distance of six miles from Andersonville, owned by Mr. Stewart, that goes by steam. There is another saw-mill about five miles from Andersonville that goes by water. There are saw-mills on the road above Andersonville. As for grist-mills, there are five in the neighborhood of Andersonville, that farthest off being about twelve miles distant. Of these mills the water-mills are run nearly the entire year, except occasionally in the summer months; in the months of July and August they may be temporarily suspended owing to the want of water, but not for any length of time. It is a very heavily timbered country, especially in the region adjoining Andersonville; it may be termed one of the most densely timbered countries in the United States. As for its fertility, Southwestern Georgia is termed, I believe, the 'Garden of America.' It was termed the Garden of the Confederacy, as having supplied the greater part of the provisions of the rebel army. It struck me that there was an uncommon supply of vegetables in 1864. Heretofore at the South there has

been but little attention paid to gardens on a large scale; but last year a very large supply of vegetables was raised, as I understood, for the purpose of being disposed of at Andersonville. Indeed, there was not a day that passed that the trains were not loaded going from Americus up to Andersonville with persons carrying vegetables there. I know that some officer at Andersonville (I cannot say who it was) had agents at Americus to purchase vegetables, and large amounts of vegetables were sent up daily or weekly.

“I know of lumber having been used at Andersonville. I was there during June and July very frequently, at the time when Governor Brown had called out the militia of the State. The militia of Southwestern Georgia were stationed at Andersonville, and their tents were all floored with good lumber, and a good many shelters of lumber were put up by the soldiers. I noticed a good many tents that were protected from the sun by boards. There seemed to be no want of lumber at that time among the Confederate soldiers.

“I did not take any regular thermometrical observations during the summer of 1864 and the winter of 1864-5, but I had a thermometer, and every day, sometimes two or three times a day, I examined it. I generally made it a rule to look at it in the morning when I got up, again about noon, and then in the evening. So far as I remember, the range of the thermometer during the summer of 1864 was very high. I think I have seen it as high as 110 degrees in the shade. Once, and only once, I put the thermometer out in the sun on an extremely hot day in June, 1864. It ranged then, if my memory serves me right, from 127 to 130 degrees that day.



"Last winter, according to my experience during more than twenty-five years' residence in Georgia, was the coldest winter we have ever had there. I have seen the thermometer as low as twenty and twenty-two degrees above zero, from eight to ten below the freezing point; one night it was colder than that; it was the night of the 4th of January. It is very distinctly impressed on my memory. During the night I was waked up by my wife, who told me some one was calling me in front of my house. I opened the window (it was excessively cold) and asked who was there. A voice replied 'A friend.' I answered that I had no friends at that time of night and very few anyhow in that country. He said that he was a friend of mine and wanted to come near the fence to speak to me. I told him my dog would bite him if he came to the fence. He then approached and said he was an Andersonville prisoner, and asked me, calling me by name, if I lived there. I told him I was the man and to wait a moment. I dressed myself, went out and chained my dog, and brought the prisoner in. He was nearly frozen; he could hardly stand; he had on only one shoe, and that was a poor one, and had a stocking upon the other foot. He was clad in the thin army flannel of the United States, badly worn; he had on a pair of light blue pantaloons which were badly worn. This was on a Wednesday morning, and he told me he had made his escape from Andersonville on the Saturday previous; that he had been apprehended and taken to Americus, where he had made his escape from the guard the night before and was directed to my house by a negro. I asked him if he was not nearly frozen; he said he was. I looked at the thermometer then, and it was

eighteen degrees above zero. This was about two o'clock in the morning — between one and two o'clock.

“I know that efforts were being made by the ladies of my county to relieve the prisoners at Andersonville; at one time a general effort was made. All that I know is that a gentleman named Mr. Davies, a Methodist presiding elder, exerted himself to induce the ladies to contribute clothing and provisions to the Federal hospital at Andersonville. A large amount of provisions was collected — some three or four wagon-loads, if I am not mistaken — and sent up there. I believe that the effort failed. First, the provost-marshal refused a pass to carry the provisions to the hospital; and when application was made by Dr. Head, who acted as spokesman for the ladies, to General Winder, it was positively refused to them. I had a conversation with General Winder three days afterward. The same matter then came up. General Winder stated, accompanied with an oath, that he believed the whole country was becoming ‘Yankee,’ and that he would be d——d if he would not put a stop to it. If he couldn’t one way, he would in another. I remarked that I did not think it was any evidence of ‘Yankee’ or Union feeling to exhibit humanity. He said there was no humanity about it; that it was intended as a slur on the Confederate Government and a covert attack on him. I told him I had understood it was done at his request; that he had requested Mr. Davies to bring this about. He said it was a d——d lie; that he had not requested anything of the kind; that for his own part he would as lief the d——d Yankees would die there as anywhere else; that, upon the whole, he did not know but that it was better for them. That was his language, or words

to that effect. Captain Wirz was not present at that time; my wife was with me at the time. There were other ladies present, but I don't think I knew any of them. They were not part of the committee."

"*Question.* In what way did General Winder speak of the ladies and their humane effort?"

"*Answer.* He used the most opprobrious language that could possibly be used — language that no gentleman could listen to, especially in the presence of his wife, without resenting it in some way — language utterly unfit to be used in the presence of ladies.

"I know Turner who had the hounds very well; his name was Wesley W. Turner."

"*Question.* What did you ever hear him say as to his duties there and what he was receiving?"

"*Answer.* It was some time in the early part of 1864 — March or April, I think. He had purchased a piece of land up in the same district in which my place is. I met him one day in Americus, and asked him if he was going to settle that land. He said he was not; that he was making more money now than anybody in that country. I inquired how he was making it. He said the Confederate government was paying him for keeping hounds to catch escaped prisoners. I asked him if he got his pay from Richmond. He said 'No, he did not trouble Richmond; that old Captain Wirz was his paymaster.' I asked him how much he received; my impression is that he did not tell me what he received. He told me he was making more money than any one else in that country; better than cultivating ground. That was early in the history of that prison—I think during March or April. It was while he was there on duty; he told me that he then had a pack of hounds, and was employed there.

"I know W. S. Winder—'Sid' Winder, as he is called. I saw him at the time he was laying out the prison, between the 1st and 15th of December, 1863. I went up to Andersonville with him and four or five other gentlemen, out of curiosity to see how the prison was to be laid out. When we had arrived there the limits of the prison had all been marked. They were then digging a trench to put the stockade posts in. Workmen were busy cutting down trees in and about where the stockade was.

"In the course of conversation I inquired of W. S. Winder if it was proposed to erect barracks or shelter of any kind inside the stockade. He replied that it was not; that the d——d Yankees who would be put in there would have no need of them. I asked him why he was cutting down all the trees, and suggested that they would prove a shelter to the prisoners, from the heat of the sun at least. He made this reply, or something similar to it: 'That is just what I am going to do; *I am going to build a pen here that will kill more d——d Yankees than can be destroyed at the front.*' Those were very nearly his words, or equivalent to them."

"*Question.* What was the general temper and spirit of his talk with regard to those prisoners?"

"*Answer.* The opinion that I formed of him was anything but creditable to his feelings, his humanity, or his gentlemanly bearing. I am not aware that I ever had a conversation with General Winder that he did not curae more or less, epecially if the subject of Andersonville was brought up. I can only reply to your question by saying that I considered him a brutal man; that I drew from his conduct and conversation as I observed them. I looked upon him as a man utterly devoid of all kindly feeling and sentiment."

"*Question.* How generally, so far as you observed, were the sufferings and horrors of the Andersonville pen known throughout the South?"

"*Answer.* So far as my knowledge and information went, the knowledge of those sufferings was general; it was so at least throughout the southern part of the Southern States; I cannot speak specially in regard to the neighborhood of Richmond. The matter was discussed in the newspapers constantly, and in private circles. Perhaps I might have heard more of it than most because it dwelt more on my mind; but it was a general subject of conversation throughout the entire Southern part of the Confederacy."

Testimony of Rev. William John Hamilton, on the Wirz trial:

"I am the pastor of the Catholic church in Macon, Ga. I visited Andersonville three times; it was one of the missions attached to my church. I went there, I think, in the month of May, 1864, and spent a day there. The following week I went there and spent three days among the prisoners and then returned and wrote a report on the condition of the hospital and stockade there to my bishop, in order that he might send the requisite number of priests to visit the prisoners; and I visited it again after the prisoners had been removed from Andersonville to Thomasville. I visited the hospital and the stockade, discharging my duties as a priest of the Catholic Church. On this, my second visit to the stockade, I found, I think, twenty-three thousand prisoners; at least the prisoners told me themselves there were that number. I found the place extremely crowded,

with a great deal of sickness and suffering among the men. I was kept so busy administering the sacrament to the dying that I had to curtail a great deal of the service, for the reason they were so numerous. They died so fast, I waited only upon those of my own church; they were the only persons who demanded my ministrations. When I speak of the number of dying I mean those among the members of my own church, and do not include others."

*"Question.* Give the court some idea of the condition of the stockade."

*"Answer.* I found the stockade extremely filthy; the men all huddled together and covered with vermin. The best idea I can give the court of the condition of the place is perhaps this: I went in there with a white linen coat on, and I had not been in there more than ten minutes when a gentleman drew my attention to the condition of my coat. It was all covered with vermin, and I had to take my coat off and leave it with one of the guards, and perform my duties in my shirt sleeves, the place was so filthy. The first person I conversed with on entering the stockade was a countryman of mine, a member of the Catholic Church who recognized me as a clergyman. I think his name was Farrell; he was from the north of Ireland. He came over toward me and introduced himself. He was quite a boy; I do not think, judging from his appearance, that he could have been more than sixteen years old. I found him without a hat, and without any covering on his feet, and without jacket or coat. He told me that his shoes had been taken from him on the battlefield. I found the boy suffering very much from a wound on his right foot; in fact, the foot was



"He stepped across the dead line and begged to be shot."

—See page 61.





split open like an oyster, and on inquiring the cause they told me it was from exposure to the sun in the stockade, and not from any wound received in battle. I took off my boots and gave him a pair of socks to cover his feet, and told him I would bring him some clothing as I intended to return to Andersonville the following week. I had to return to Macon to get another priest to take my place on Sunday. When I returned the following week, on inquiring for this man Farrell, his companions told me he had stepped across the dead-line and requested the guard to shoot him. He was not insane at the time I was conversing with him. It was three or four days after that when I was asking for him. I think it was the latter part of May, 1864.

"When I went into the hospital I found it almost as crowded as the stockade was; the men were dying very rapidly from scurvy, diarrhoea and dysentery; and as far as I could observe, I could not see that they received any medical treatment whatsoever, or any medicines at all. They were in tents; the hospital was composed of tents arranged in avenues; and I did not see that they had anything under them but the ground; in some cases I think they had dried leaves that they had gathered together. In my ministrations at the hospital I saw one surgeon, the surgeon in charge there at the time, Dr. White.

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"When I visited the stockade there was no shelter at all so far as I could see, except that some of the men who had their blankets had put them up on little bits of roots that they had abstracted from the ground; but I could not see any tents, or shelter of any other kind.

I got the names of several prisoners who had relatives living in the South, and wrote to their friends when I returned to Macon, and I had some tents introduced there; they were sent down and the men received them.

“During my second visit to the prison I was told there was an Irishman over at the extreme end of the stockade who was calling for a priest. I suppose he had heard that I had visited the prison the day before, and he was very anxious to see a priest and was calling for one all over the stockade.

“There is a branch that runs right through the centre of the stockade, and I tried to cross the branch, but was unable to do so as the men were crowding around trying to get into the water to cool themselves. I could not get over the branch, and had to leave the stockade without seeing the man. The heat was intolerable; there was no air at all in the stockade. The logs of which the stockade was composed were so close together that I could not feel any fresh air inside; and with a strong sun beaming down on it and no shelter at all, of course the heat must have been insufferable; at least I felt it so.

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“I would frequently have to creep on my hands and knees into the holes the men had burrowed in the ground, and stretch myself alongside of them to hear their confessions. I found them almost living in vermin in those holes; they could not be in any other condition but a filthy one, because they got no soap and no change of clothing, and were there all huddled up together.

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"I was in there early the next morning, and in going down one of the avenues I counted from forty to sixty bodies of those who had died during the night in the hospital.

"I have seen the men making little places from a foot to a foot and a half deep, and stretching their blankets right over them. I have crawled into such places frequently to hear the confessions of the dying. They would hold from one to two; sometimes a prisoner would share his blanket with another and allow him to get under shelter.

"When I returned from the stockade after my second visit to it at the latter end of May, I represented these things to General Cobb. I wrote to my Bishop and told him that these men were dying in large numbers; that there were many Catholics there, and that they required the services of a priest; and he sent up Father Whelan. Father Whelan expressed a desire to see General Cobb before he went down to the stockade. I called upon General Cobb; I told him I had been there, and gave him a description of the place as well as I could, and he asked me what I would recommend to be done, as he intended to write to Richmond with regard to the condition of that place.

*"After I found out from his conversation that nothing more could be done for the bodily comfort of the men, owing to the stringency of the blockade, etc., I advised him to parole those men upon their own word of honor, and take them down to Jacksonville, Fla., and turn them into the Federal lines. Whether that recommendation was acted on or not I do not know; he asked my opinion and I gave it. At that time when I told*

him of the condition of things as I found them there it was known to the whole country, for it was published in the newspapers of the South.

“When General Cobb asked me to give him a description of the condition of the place, he remarked, I think, that he was going to write to Richmond, and wanted me to give him some information on the point. He remarked, also, that he would like me to give him a description because he knew the relations that existed between a Catholic priest and members of his church, and that they would be more unreserved in communicating with me than with others.”

The witness William M. Peebles, Confederate clerk, sworn:

“I saw several men in the stocks. I did not learn their names. They were Federal prisoners. I was passing around one day during a hard rain, and saw a prisoner in the stocks. He seemed to be near drowning. I rode up and put an umbrella over him; I passed up to Captain Wirz’s headquarters and told him the prisoner was there and might drown. He remarked, ‘let him drown,’ using an oath. His words, as well as I can remember, were—‘Let the d——d Yankee drown; I don’t care.’ In a few moments some one from his headquarters went down and released the prisoner—took him out from the stocks. It was during a very hard rain. The man’s head was kind of erect, and it was raining down in his face; he looked as though he would drown; that was what caused me to make the report.”



A sample of John Winder's "Kindness" to Union Prisoners —  
See page 65.



H. M. Davidson, a Union prisoner of war, for a time paroled for duty as surgeon's clerk, whose statement was also incorporated into the report of the committee of the House on the treatment of Union prisoners of war, speaking of punishments inflicted at Andersonville, and their life there, says:

"The prisoner upon recapture was subjected to several grades of punishment, the first of which was the standing stocks \* \* \* \* \*

Above these bars, and at right angles with them in the middle of the frame, were two other bars containing a notch for the neck, which also had a lateral and perpendicular motion, the latter to enable them to be adjusted to the height of the culprit. At the bottom were two similar and parallel bars, with notches for the legs. When the victim was 'put up,' his feet were first fastened, and then his arms extended on a line parallel with the shoulders, and also fastened, and finally his neck 'shut in,' when he was left to his misery for twenty-four hours. In this painful position, unable to change in the least degree, starving, thirsting, bleeding, with the hot sun of a July or August day pouring floods of liquid fire upon his unprotected head, the sufferer paid the initial penalty of his rash attempt to regain his liberty.

"After the stocks came the ball and chain. For this punishment two men were usually required; a thirty-two-pound cannon ball was fastened to the outside leg of each with a chain about two feet long, and another ball weighing sixty-four pounds chained between them. The chains by which these balls were attached to the legs were so short that they could be carried only by attach-

ing a string to the thirty-two-pounder and raising it by the hand; the sixty-four-pound weight was supported by a stick when the victims wished to 'walk out.' The 'jewelry' was continued on the men for three or four weeks, or during the whim of Captain Wirz.

"There was one refinement on the ball and chain which deserves special mention. It was devised by Captain Wirz himself, and did great credit to his fiendish nature and his hellish gust for torment. It was denominated the 'chain gang,' and was used only in one instance. The gang at first contained twelve men. They were first fastened together with short chains twenty inches to two feet in length, which were attached to iron collars riveted around their necks, each man being thus chained to the man on his right and left, and the twelve forming a circle. To one leg of each a thirty-two-pound ball was chained, while one sixty-four-pounder was fastened to every four by the other leg. There was no possible manner in which the men could lie down, sit down, or stand erect with any degree of ease; yet they were kept in this state for four weeks in the open ground outside the stockade, exposed alike to storm and sun, with no covering but their ragged clothing and no protection against the cold dews of the night. One of the gang was sick with chronic dysentery, but the surgeon's clerks were all forbidden to give him any medicine, and he died under the torture. He was taken out of his irons after he was dead, and the remaining eleven forced to carry his share of the weight attached to themselves until the period of their torture had expired. The crime for which these men were 'put up' in this atrocious manner was an attempted escape; some of them had broken



from the hospital, and others had been recaptured once before.

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"The prisoners who had not been recently vaccinated were compelled under severe penalties to undergo this operation, the surgeon having been requested, it was said, by the United States Government to do this as a preventive against the small-pox. It seemed strange to us that here, where instances of that disease were so extremely rare, such an order should be given; but the sequel showed the devilish cunning of the authorities at Andersonville. *The virus was impure*, and if the inoculation with the poison failed (as it did in many instances) of carrying off the patient, the wound would not heal under the influence of the heat, starvation and impure air, and invariably terminated in horrible-looking ulcers. I have said that the virus was impure; I judge it to have been so from its effects and not from a chemical analysis of it; but there were cases of inoculation which had been made at Danville three months previous to our removal to Camp Sumter that took the same form as every case assumed after our incarceration there. The worst cases at Andersonville were caused by the vaccination. The ravages of the scurvy, it is true, were fearful, and it worked in slight scratches and slight sores caused by the bite of insects, but in none of these did it assume the horrible form that characterized the inoculated wounds; and the only inference that can be drawn from this fact is, that our prisoners were deliberately poisoned by vaccination.

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"From my position (as surgeon's clerk) I could see the men as they came into the inclosure, and trace the

line far back into the stockade itself. There on the road running nearly across the area, the wretched invalids had gathered in a dense crowd. Some were standing, or leaning, faint, emaciated and weak, upon their stronger comrades; others were lying down upon the bare ground, and over all there hovered a hideous spectre of death, which was reflected upon their squalid forms and upon their thin, pale faces, and in their large, hollow eyes that stared glassily upon us. The earth was black with human beings—a living, writhing, famishing mass of agonizing life.

“Three thousand men daily visited the surgeons at this place for remedies, besides those to whom medicine was administered without a daily examination. On my own book there were at one time nine hundred and forty-five names of sick men under treatment by one surgeon. Taking this as a basis the fourteen clerks would have in charge thirteen thousand, two hundred and thirty patients; and these were exclusive of the men who refused to report at sick-call, and those who were confined in the hospitals—the latter numbering about two thousand men.

“At this time it is believed that there were not five thousand well men among the thirty-two thousand confined in the stockade. Those who had been longest in the stockade, and those who had come among us in a destitute condition were the earliest and greatest sufferers. It required time, even in that den of filth and disease and upon the scanty allowance given us, to break down the strong constitutional health of those men; but time did effect it, though some struggled long and bravely for life.

“The scurvy is another and most frequent disease, and like the gangrene can receive only temporary relief

here. Nearly one-half of the number of patients examined daily were afflicted with this fearful scourge, very few of whom recovered, some of them lingering for weeks before the fatal termination of the disease.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The patients must inevitably die; some of them may live a few weeks longer. Eighty of those eighty-seven men who came to-day for relief for other diseases besides scurvy, will lie beneath the turf, in yonder Golgotha, beyond the reach of the atrocious tortures that have made their last days a hell.

"In the month of June, 1864, there were twenty-two days of rain, and the sky was not clear of clouds during all that dreary period for a moment. At times the heavens opened and poured floods of water down upon us; then the sun forced its way through a rift of clouds, and for a few minutes scorched us with its flames, when his fire was extinguished by another torrent. The men were drenched in their open pen during the day, and at night they lay down, still drenched, to sleep upon beds of sand which were saturated with water. When the long rain ceased at last the hot sun burst out upon them, raising deadly vapors from the swamps, which they breathed, and scorching and parching them with fire. The thermometer stood at 104 degrees in the shade, and in the open ground the heat was terrific. In consequence of this storm, malignant fevers broke out among the prisoners, and for a long time they raged with fearful violence. Pneumonia prevailed to a very great extent, and hundreds fell victims to its ravages. These cases continued for many weeks, and we find their diagnosis upon every clerk's list during the months of July and

August. Erysipelas also appeared, but its career was soon run, for the unhappy patient died within a few days, unless the little washing of iodine which was applied to the infected spot, succeeded in checking it at once. The glaring sun had smitten men with blindness, and they groped their way darkly among their comrades.

“Yet in all this misery, squalor and filth there was not a ray of hope. The men must suffer on without succor and without help; the weary days seemed months, and the weeks an eternity, till it was as if they had been removed to a land of fiends, which the omnipresence of God could not reach, and a demon more merciless, more relentless than the prince of hell ruled over us.

“From eight o'clock until two the work of examining the sick continued. Day after day, for weeks and months, those surgeons labored, breathing the unwholesome air, and in constant contact with those horrible diseases; but they were patient, faithful men, and their sympathy with the victims often benefited them as much as the medicine they prescribed. But they were compelled to act under the orders of General Winder and of Captain Wirz, and could do little beyond expressing their abhorrence of the barbarity with which we were treated, and their wish to alleviate our sufferings. I gladly record the little acts of kindness performed by them, for they were verdant spots in that vast Sahara of misery. Doctors Watkins, Rowzie, Thornburn, Reeves, Williams, James, Thompson, Pilott and Sanders deserve, and will receive, the lasting gratitude of the prisoners of Andersonville.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have seen the field of battle, and walked among the dead many days after the conflict, and witnessed the unburied bodies of men thrown together in heaps by a bursting shell, slowly decaying in the hot sun, but the stench arising from them, and their horrid appearance were less sickening and less repulsive than this. I have seen men in this hospital suffer amputation again and again in a fruitless effort to stay the ravages of this fearful gangrene; and under the knife, and while lying on the ground blistering and burning, the ceaseless gnawing within forced from their otherwise silent lips the low, moaning, pleading cry for food; and I have listened to this heartrending call, and looked upon those emaciated limbs till my blood boiled with helpless rage against the worse than brutal villains who planned those atrocious crimes and the coward who delighted in carrying out their details.

"No language can describe this bed of rottenness. Since the tongue of man first learned to syllable his thoughts such cruelties were never yet devised and practiced, and words are wanted to depict them. The surgeons made their reports, in which were represented the true condition of these dying men, and begged for reform, for food and covering; but they might as well have sought mercy from death—better have done so, for death is merciful sometimes, but our tormentors never. The gangrene wards were the worst in the hospital, but the others were shocking. *Famine, famine, everywhere.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"The dead house had been constructed of insufficient dimensions to contain the bodies of all that died. Sometimes forty, often thirty, were placed upon the

ground outside its limits, where they lay in the open air, with some vain attempt at uniformity in their arrangement. Within and around this place the final results of our treatment were to be seen. Here, indeed, were the fruits of the 'natural agencies' which were to do the work 'faster than the bullet.' Nor were the number of the dead few and occasional. During the month of August two thousand nine hundred and ninety bodies were deposited in the dead house previous to burial, an average of more than ninety-six per day, exceeding by one thousand the largest brigade engaged in the battle of Stone River, and being nearly seven-eighths as many as the entire division of Brigadier General Van Cleve in that famous engagement. But during the latter part of the month the mortality was much greater than at the first, the number of dead being 100, 110, 120, 125 and 140 per day.

"In the early morning the dead-cart came for the bodies; this was an army wagon, without covering, drawn by four mules and driven by a slave. The bodies were tossed into the cart without regularity or decency, being thrown upon one another as logs or sticks are packed in a pile. In this manner, with their arms and legs hanging over the sides, and their heads jostling and beating against each other, as the sable driver whistling a merry strain hauled them to the grave, hurrying rapidly over roots and stumps, the Federal prisoners were carried out to the burial.

"The cemetery was located northwest of the stockade, and nearly a mile from the hospital, upon a beautiful open spot surrounded by the forests of pine, and slightly sloping toward the northeast. The dead were

buried by a squad of paroled prisoners selected for this purpose. A trench running due north and south was dug about four feet in depth, six feet wide, and of sufficient length to contain the bodies for the day. In this the bodies were placed side by side, with their faces to the east, and the earth thrown in on them. A little mound a foot in height was raised over each body; a stake, branded with the number on the label, placed at the head of each, and without a prayer said over the dead, without a tear from the strangers that performed the last rite, the ceremony was ended. The number upon the stake referred to a register kept in the office of the chief surgeon, by Mr. Atwater, a paroled prisoner, in which were the number, name, rank, company, regiment (when these were known), date of death, and name of disease. This register was kept with great care, and if it is still in existence, will correctly refer the inquiring friend to the spot where the loved one lies. But some of those who died in the stockade expired without revealing their name; of such only the number is recorded, and the little word 'unknown' comprises all that is left of many a brave man's history."

Warren Lee Goss, a Union soldier and non-commissioned officer, who was confined for many months in six prisons besides Andersonville, has vividly depicted the scenes of cruelty and suffering he witnessed in them all. The following are brief extracts from his sworn statement:

"One of the great instruments of death in the Andersonville prison was the 'dead-line.' This line con-

sisted of a row of stakes driven into the ground, with narrow board strips nailed down upon the top, at the distance of about fifteen feet from the stockade on the interior side. This line was closely guarded by sentinels stationed above on the stockade, and any person who approached it, as many unconsciously did, as in the crowded condition of the prison was often unavoidable, was shot dead, with no warning whatever to admonish him that death was near.

"An instance of this kind came to my notice the second day I was in prison. A poor, one-legged cripple placed one hand on the dead-line to support him while he got his crutch, which had fallen from his feeble grasp to the ground. In this position he was shot through the lungs, and laid near the dead-line, writhing in torments most of the forenoon, until at last death came to his relief. None dared approach him to relieve him through fear of the same fate. The guard loaded his musket after he had performed this dastardly act, and, grinning with satisfaction, viewed the body of the dying murdered man for nearly an hour with apparent pleasure, occasionally raising his gun to threaten any one who from curiosity or pity dared to approach the poor fellow.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Scarcely a night or day passed but the sharp crack of a rifle told of the murder of another defenseless victim. Men becoming tired of life committed suicide in this manner. They had but to get under the dead-line, or lean upon it, and their fate was sealed in death.

"An incident of this kind came to my knowledge in July. A New York soldier had tried once or twice to escape, by which means he had lost his cooking utensils



and his blanket, and was obliged to endure the rain and heat without protection, and to borrow, beg or steal cooking implements, eat his food raw, or starve. Lying in the rain often at night, followed by the tropical heat of the day, was torture which goaded him to desperation. He announced his determination to die, and getting over the dead-line was shot through the heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The stench polluted and pervaded the whole atmosphere of the prison, and to get outside it seemed like a new development of creation, so different was it from the poisonous vapors exhaled from this cess pool with which the prison air was reeking. During the day the sun drank up the most noxious of these vapors, but in the night the terrible miasma and stench pervaded the atmosphere almost to suffocation.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Nothing ever before seen in a civilized country could give one an idea of the physical condition to which starvation and disease had reduced these men. It was only strange that men should retain life so long as to be reduced to the skeleton condition of the great mass of these men who died in prison. During one week there are said to have died thirteen hundred and eighty men! Death lost all its sanctity by reason of its frequent occurrence. Death by starvation and exposure was preceded by a mild kind of insanity, or idiocy, when the mind felt not the misery of the body and was unable to provide for its wants. During July one could hardly step without seeing some poor victim in his last agony. The piteous appeals of these famine-stricken men, their

bones in some cases worn through their flesh, were enough to excite pity and compassion in hearts of stone.

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“I have spoken of a mild kind of insanity which precedes death by starvation, and a brooding melancholy in which the mind wanders from real to imaginary things. Private Peter Dunn, of my company, was an instance of this kind. At an early date of his imprisonment he lost his tin cup, which was with him—as was commonly the case about the prison—the only cooking implement. His blanket was also lost, and he was left destitute of all shelter and of every comfort except that which was furnished him by companions who were sufferers in common with himself and not overstocked with necessaries and comforts. Gradually, as he wasted away, his mind wandered, and in his imagination he was the possessor of those luxuries which the imagination will fasten upon when the body feels the keenest pangs of hunger. With simple sincerity he would speak of some luxury which he imagined he had partaken of. Suddenly a gleam of intelligence would overspread his face; he would speak of the prison, and say: ‘This is a dreadful place for the boys, isn’t it? I don’t enjoy myself when I have anything good to eat, there are so many around me who look hungry;’ and then, gazing in my face, in the saddest modulations I ever heard in a human voice: ‘You look hungry, too, Sarg. ;’ and then, sinking his voice to a whisper, added: ‘Oh dear! I’m hungry too sometimes.’

“Poor Peter! He soon died a lingering death from starvation and exposure. In the lucid moments that preceded death he said, as I stood over his poor, famine-

pinched form, 'I'm dreadful cold and hungry, Sarg.' He again relapsed into a state of wandering, with the names of 'Mary' and 'Mother' upon his lips; and the last faint action of life, when he could no longer speak, was to point his finger to his pallid, gasping lips in mute entreaty for food.

"Charles E. Bent was a drummer in my company—a fine lad, with as big a heart in his small body as ever throbbed in the breast of a man. He was a silent boy, who rarely manifested any emotion, and spoke but seldom, but, as his comrades expressed it, 'kept up a thinking' I observed nothing in his conduct or manners to denote insanity, until one afternoon about sun-down one of his comrades noticed the absence of a ring commonly worn upon his hand, and inquired where it was. 'When I was out just now,' he said, 'my sister came and took it and gave it to an angel.' The next day as the sun went down, its last rays lingered, it seemed to me, caressingly upon the dear, pallid face of the dead boy. His pain and sorrow were ended, and heartless men no longer could torture him with hunger and cruelty.

"C. H. A. Moore was a drummer in my company—the only son of a widowed mother. All the wealth of maternal affection had been fondly lavished upon him. In him all her hopes were centered, and it was with great reluctance that she finally agreed to his enlistment. In prison he gradually wasted away until he died. The day previous to his death I saw and conversed with him, tried to encourage and cheer him, but a look of premature age had settled over his youthful face, which bore but little semblance to the bright, expressive look he wore when he enlisted. He was perfectly sane and con-

versed with uncommon clearness and method, as though his mind had been suddenly developed by intense suffering. His face bore an unchanged, listless expression, which I have noticed in prison betokened the loss of hope. He spoke of home and of his mother, but his words were all in the same key — monotonous and weary, with a stony, unmoved expression of countenance. On a face so young I never saw such indescribable hopelessness; he was despair petrified! and when I think of it even now, it pierces me to the heart. His was a lingering death by starvation and exposure, with no relief from unmitigated misery.”

From testimony of Thomas N. Way, of the 1st Ohio Volunteers:

“I know of the use of hounds at Andersonville; they caught me three times. I remember about a soldier being torn to pieces by hounds. He was a young man whose name I don't know. I knew him by the name of Fred. He was about seventeen years old. When we heard the dogs coming, I and another prisoner who was with me, being old hands, climbed a tree. Fred tried to do so, but he had not got up when the hounds caught him by the foot and pulled him down. In less than three minutes he was torn to pieces. Turner, who owned the hounds, was close behind. He got up just as the man was torn up and secured the hounds and we came down. Fred was all torn to pieces and died. Turner said: ‘It's good for the ————; I wish they had torn the three of you to pieces.’”

Felix De La Baume, 35th New York Volunteers, an Andersonville prisoner, testified regarding the blood-hounds:



"The man climbing the tree represents Holm, and I am represented lying under the tree."—See page 79.



"I and Holm, who escaped with me, hid ourselves under a very large tree in a kind of mud-hole among the bushes and remained there over an hour; then we heard the dogs bark. An old Indian had once told me that in case of being overtaken by blood-hounds, I should pretend to be dead and the hounds would not attack me. So I told Holm to remain quiet in the bushes and not make any noise, but he was so frightened by the dogs that he tried to get up a tree so as not to be torn to pieces by them. While he was trying to get up the tree the dogs came up and caught hold of him by one of his legs, biting quite a large hole. I have drawn a representation of that scene. The man climbing the tree represents Holm, and I am represented lying under the tree. My comrade was torn very badly. We were brought back by a sergeant and the men who had the dogs."

R. Bartley, of Alleghany City, Pa., a Union officer and prisoner of war, states as follows:

"I was a lieutenant in the United States Signal Corps; was signal officer with Colonel Dahlgren's expedition to Richmond when he was killed and his body mutilated. With other officers of Colonel Dahlgren's force I was kept in close confinement with negro enlisted men in Libby Prison for five months and fourteen days, as felons not entitled to the treatment of prisoners of war. We were treated as brutes by the prison officials by orders from James A. Seddon, Rebel Secretary of War. When taken out of the cell to be carried South, the projecting bones of my body were cutting through the skin from starvation, which has left me permanently disabled, having lost the use of my eyes. I have known

officers to be shot and bayoneted for no cause; and as for robbery, it was one of the lesser evils to which we were subjected."

One might suppose that the extracts of testimony by Confederate doctors and officers as well as Union prisoners quoted in the foregoing pages, revealed a chapter of atrocities difficult to extend and almost impossible to conceive. As a matter of fact they are wholly inadequate to picture to human understanding the unutterable woes and unnamable cruelties that transcend the realm of fancy, eclipsing Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Hell*.

Dr. Valentine Mott, of New York—the foremost surgeon of his time, who expired on hearing the tidings of the assassination of President Lincoln, whose friend he was—declared before a committee of Congress, that in the active practice of his profession as a physician and surgeon covering a period of over fifty years, and accustomed as he was to witnessing human suffering in all its most painful phases, none of the scenes witnessed in his personal or professional life could begin to compare with the condition in which he found the released prisoners of Andersonville, Salisbury and Florence.



## CHAPTER V.

### *From Official Records and Confederate Archives.*

LET us group some of the facts relating to Southern prisons as they are substantiated both by the captured Confederate archives at Richmond and the official records at Washington.

The first batch of prisoners reached Andersonville on February 15, 1864. The whole number received during its existence as a prison was 49,485. On August 9th, 1864, there was found to be in the stockade 33,006. The number of deaths, as shown by the register kept in the chief surgeon's office at the prison, was 12,631; *number of graves, 13,705.* It frequently happened that from fifty to one hundred prisoners were found dead on the ground within the stockade when the gates were opened in the morning, and the dead wagon had to make several trips to carry off the corpses, which were piled in the wagon like cordwood, and the same wagon would on its return trip be used to bring the prisoners their rations of meal for the day. The deaths on one day reached one hundred and forty.

The shallow stream that ran through the camp and which supplied the prisoners with water, was constantly swarmed with thousands of sufferers, ragged and alive with vermin, many suffering with frightful gangrene, scurvy, and other diseases then raging with fearful violence, until the water was liquid filth, and the banks on either side were trampled by the shoeless multitude into a festering morass that sent up fumes of pestilence and death. It was learned by actual count on one day that a prisoner died at Andersonville *every eleven minutes*, counting the whole twenty-four hours.

Three hundred and twenty-eight escapes were made from the stockade. Of these, many who escaped and were re-taken were so savagely punished that they died under the torture. More than fifty died by being torn by the hounds regularly employed by the Confederate authorities to track escaping prisoners. To the number who died at Andersonville prison over five hundred must be added who died after their release and before they could reach their homes.

For the burial of the dead, trenches varying from one hundred to two hundred feet in length were dug daily, and there were often bodies enough to fill them when placed side by side in an uncoffined state.

The thumbs and toes of each corpse were held in burial position by bits of string. A small rude pine board was placed at each of their heads, on which was placed a number corresponding with the same number on the hospital register.

The whole number of Union prisoners in Confederate hands during the war was 188,000. The death-rate among the survivors of Southern prisons from the close of the war up to 1880 is estimated at seventeen per cent. The records of the War Department at Washington show that the mortality among the Confederate prisoners at Fort Delaware was for eleven months *two per cent.*; and at Johnson's Island during twenty-one months there were 134 deaths out of six thousand prisoners.

The deaths at Andersonville from Feb. 24, 1864, to Sept. 21, 1864 (seven months) numbered 9,479. Per cent. of deaths, 23.34, or *nearly one-fourth of all the prisoners confined there*. The War Department estimates that twenty per cent. should be added to these figures for good reasons. Among these, the fact that all deaths were not recorded. This is sustained by this fact:

Number of deaths shown by hospital records...	12,631
Number of graves.....	13,705
Difference....	1,074

The report of Captain Wirz for August, 1864, shows the following:

Prisoners on hand.....	31,678
Died during month.....	2,993
Average daily deaths .....	100
Monthly per cent. of deaths.....	9.45
Yearly per cent. of deaths.....	*113.40

The War Department report shows the following captures by the Confederates during the four years of the war:

Federal officers.....	7,092
Enlisted men.....	179,091
Union citizens.....	1,962

Total .....	188,145
Per cent. of deaths, counting all Rebel prisons.	38.70
The number of men who entered the Union armies was, by the War Department record.	
	2,335,951
Number of Confederates captured by Union armies .....	
	476,189
Paroled .....	248,599
Number actually confined in Northern prisons.	227,590
Mortality of Confederate soldiers ascertained by graves.....	
	30,152
Per cent. of deaths.....	13.250

If the monthly mortality among Confederates held in our prisons had been as great as in Southern prisons, taking the whole number of captures as a basis, the deaths in Northern prisons, instead of

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\*Showing that all the prisoners would have died in less than ten and one-half months.

30,152, *would have been 92,000.* In other words, nearly two out of five, or forty out of each one hundred, died in their hands; while one in seventeen, or six of each one hundred, died in our hands.

The number killed and who died of wounds during the war, counting officers and men, white and colored, was 78,231. This, as against the 60,000 who died in prison, or immediately after being released, shows a difference of but 18,231 more men killed in action and dying of wounds received in action than died from confinement in Confederate prisons.

More men died in Andersonville prison alone than were killed in battle and died of wounds during the whole Mexican war. The prisoners who died in that prison outnumbered the slain in the battles of Waterloo, Gettysburg and The Wilderness combined. Yet Andersonville, with its terrors and appalling harvest of death, was but a type of a score of other military prisons that existed throughout the Confederacy under the personal supervision of Mr. Davis' confidential friend and agent, John H. Winder, a man infinitely more merciless and cruel than Marat.

Careful estimates show that the average length of life in Andersonville was ninety-five days, assum-

ing that a prisoner entered it in good health. Well might Winder have inscribed over its portal the fateful sentence: "*Who enters here leaves hope behind.*"

The sick and dying were left without attendance, medicine, or even a drink, and scores of the dead were left to decompose under the blistering sun and pollute the air which the more miserable living were forced to breathe. The sentinels looked down from their elevated posts upon thirty-five thousand famishing men. Hope died within brave hearts that had never faltered at the cannon's mouth. Heaven never looked down upon a spectacle so pitiable, and although every detail of that cruel scene was familiar to Jefferson Davis, it had not the power to awaken a chord of pity in that frozen heart.

In every rain it was a common sight to see poor sufferers whose weak stomachs revolted against the sickening water of the dirty ditch, lying on their backs in the sand with their mouths open to catch the pure drops that descended from the clouds, or holding up some rag of clothing to absorb a drink to slake their burning thirst. Many of the fainting creatures crept into holes in the ground to escape the fierce flood of fire poured down by a noon-day sun, and a rain following at night the miserable victims, unable to drag themselves out, were drowned in the

pits that in daytime gave them shelter and at night a grave.

During the existence of the prison not less than three hundred men were shot by the guards on the dead-line. Not less than fifty perished by the bloodhounds of Turner. From the compulsory vaccination with impure virus one hundred men at least lost the use of their arms, and from the same cause about two hundred died. An alphabetical list of the Andersonville dead copied from the hospital register and printed by the New York *Tribune* makes a volume nearly the size of the *Century Magazine*, and forms indeed a sad directory of a dead city!

In illustration of this brief, sad and last record of the dead martyrs, the following is the entry of death for the sixteen-year-old brother of the writer, wounded and captured in Sherman's march through Georgia:

"*Moran, T., Co. C, 89th Ills. Sept. 18, '64. 9187.*"

Another brother, Patrick Moran, a private in the 5th Michigan Infantry, who was wounded and taken at the Weldon Railroad, Va., was in the Salisbury prison when the attempt to force the guard was made. He was released the same day as the writer, March 1st, 1865. at Wilmington, and the fearful exposures through which he had passed soon hurried him to his grave.

In a speech delivered in Congress a few years ago Mr. Blaine declared the responsibility of Jefferson Davis in these words:

“Mr. Davis was the author, knowingly, deliberately, guiltily and wilfully, of the gigantic murder and crime of Andersonville; and I here before God, measuring my words, knowing their full extent and import, declare that neither the deeds of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, nor the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, nor the thumbscrews and engines of torture of the Spanish Inquisition begin to compare in atrocity with the hideous crimes of Andersonville.” •

These words were either true or they were atrocious. They were certainly the utterance of a man who had closely read and studied all attainable evidence on the subject; and they were declared from a public prominence that challenged the attention of the world a generation after the war.

Mr. Davis, commenting on Mr. Blaine's speech, took his customary refuge behind “his people,” and instead of making the full and specific denial which conscious innocence would have eagerly sought, and which his assailed honor demanded both for himself and for the South, he sought content in an undignified and whining letter to a friend in Congress,



who, stung by the lance of Mr. Blaine, implored Davis to defend himself. The appeal was as vain as the entreated performance was impossible. In the few feeble sentences of a letter which his friend unwisely published, he reiterated the faded and only excuse he has foolishly fondled to the end, namely: That the dreadful accusations of Mr. Blaine and of others equally emphatic were merely partisan attacks upon the Southern people, "*by whose authority and in whose behalf,*" he says, "*my deeds were done.*" That he should have ventured even in the dismay of defeat to seek so false and ignoble a refuge as this displays the amazing estimate he put upon the patience of the Southern people, who are thus dragooned into an endorsement of the hideous iniquity of Andersonville.

No tongue or pen in the North, in the whitest heat of the war, ever pronounced upon the Southern people or the Southern army a libel so gross and groundless as this of the man to whom they had entrusted their honor and their cause. The spectacle of this base effort to escape the penalty of his offenses will dignify by comparison the female attire in which he sought to elude his captors in Georgia—the grotesque act that closed his public career.

An enlightened world can never be made believe that the generous and brave people of the South ever authorized or approved such infamy as starving and freezing to death their Northern countrymen whom their soldiers had taken in honorable battle. No, it was not the *South* that invented and superintended such counterfeits of hell as Andersonville, Salisbury and Belle Isle. Not the Southern soldiers who broke Grant's stubborn lines at Shiloh when Albert Sidney Johnston fell. Not the veterans who died with "Pat" Clerbourne and Bishop Polk. Not the "foot cavalry" in whose van Stonewall Jackson fell at Chancellorsville, and who followed Ewell to the Susquehanna in '63. Nor yet the bronzed men of Pickett who bore the torn cross of the South with Armsted over the dismantled and smoking guns of Cushing to the Rebellion's high-water mark at Gettysburg.

No! It was none of these who left the shameful blight of Andersonville upon our history, and not for these that the survivors of Southern prisons or the Northern people have reproaches. That crime was hatched by men of different mould, and the agents for its execution were tools and underlings of more ignoble caste. The men whom Jefferson Davis selected to consummate the atrocious deed were chosen after mature deliberation. They were

men *whom he intimately knew*, and whom nature had coined and habits prepared for deeds that soldiers scorn. They were the Winders and the Turners, miscreants like Wirz, and thugs like Northrop and Gee—men who covered under the mask of a soldier's uniform the instincts and infamy of assassins; men who never in prayer sought mercy of God and never in deed gave mercy to man.

In these progressive and tranquil days when a new generation sees the roses of peace climbing over the broken cannon of the war, it would seem impossible for the mind to imbibe the belief that a plot so diabolical and revolting in extent and detail could have been conceived by enlightened Americans, and agents found for its execution, were it not that the finger of history points out to us the graveyards of the past, and the names of men who, impelled by the unholy lust for power and lured by the *ignis-fatuus* of ambition, have gone down with red dripping hands in the maelstrom of ruin and death—men who, to attain supremacy over tribe or nation, were ready

"To wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

In the month of August, 1887, the International Medical Congress met in Washington for an interchange of counsel, and all information tending to

advance the beneficent interests and objects of medical science. Among the most interesting matters presented for pathological study in this congress was the authenticated fact that, great as was the aggregate in casualties among the Union troops in the field during the rebellion, it did not exceed in battle two per cent. in the whole four years; whereas the death-rate among the Union prisoners at Andersonville was proven to be *twenty-four per cent. in seven months.*

Can rhetoric exaggerate the inhuman treatment of Union captives which these figures presented by the combined medical talent of America and Europe reveal? And will any sane person assert that a statement like this, made by a congress like this, twenty-two years after the war closed, was the utterance of irresponsible partisans to foment sectional discord, and to "*fire the Northern heart!*"

At Salisbury even this was eclipsed; for there, out of ten thousand prisoners admitted to the prison from September, 1864, to February, 1865 (five months), *five thousand died, or fifty per cent!*

Every survivor of those pens of pestilence and systematic murder, and every representative in Congress from the North who has dared to publicly reveal and honestly denounce the matchless iniquities

of Southern prisons, has been fiercely maligned and falsely misjudged for a quarter of a century by Jefferson Davis and his echoing essayists of the brand of Stevenson, whom he selected with the Winders to preside over the *medical* features of the Andersonville *system*. Nor does the writer of this fragment of prison history expect or crave any different treatment at their hands than that of his comrades and countrymen. He and they, having done their humble share in the preservation of this Union in field and dungeon during four of the bitterest and bloodiest years of its existence, have a right to insist that the true history of the war in all its phases shall be fully, fairly, and fearlessly written; that the record shall stand inviolate and neither be distorted nor expunged to suit sectional tastes or political expediency.

It should not only be the privilege but the duty of our soldiers to relate their experiences, while among us, and thus furnish the warp from which future years may weave the enduring fabric of history. Heaven forbid, then, that ever in our country, from the Virginias to the Dakotas, the soldiers who bled in field and starved in dungeon for their common preservation shall be denied the right to publicly tell the story of their campaigns or captivity. And

Heaven forbid that ever in this Republic a mighty crime shall be condoned, much less dignified, because of the eminence of the criminal.

More than a century ago Surajah Dowlah, a viceroy of India, besieged and captured the little English colony of Fort William at Calcutta, in Bengal; and having robbed his prisoners, he promised to spare their lives, but turned them over to the mercy of the guards, who drove one hundred and forty-six of them into a one-story brick structure about fifteen feet in height, and having an interior ground space about twenty square feet with narrow and iron-barred apertures near the eaves of the roof. Forced into this dungeon at the point of the bayonet, the heavy door was closed and bolted upon the victims, on a mid-summer night, "when" — says Macaulay — "life in Southern India is only made endurable to Europeans by high ceilings, and moving fans." The horrors of that night as the strongest fought fiercely for places near the small openings through which the merciless guards mocked the shrieking victims by sprinkling drops of water through the gratings, was beyond the descriptive genius of the greatest of historians.

When morning at last came and their agonizing cries grew fainter, and at last ceased, the door was

opened and twenty-three ghostly and speechless victims staggered into the air. A lane was made, and one hundred and twenty-three dead bodies on which decomposition had already made rapid and loathsome progress were carried out. A pit was dug, the victims thrown into it in a ghastly heap and covered from sight.

History has recorded how the tragedy shocked all Christendom, and how relentlessly and terribly the crime was avenged by the English. And thus for more than a century the “Black Hole of Calcutta” has stood in every Christian land as the symbol of all that was barbarous in warfare. But its author was a debauched, superstitious and benighted savage of India, to whom the infliction of pain upon man and beast had from his childhood afforded the keenest pleasure, and who was subject to no rule but that of his savage passions. The dreadful cruelty in this instance was confined at least to a few agonizing hours, and cost one hundred and twenty-three lives—the exact number of Union prisoners who *froze to death* at Belle Isle. The savage Hindoo could not but see in his captives the representatives of powerful foreign foes whom he had from early youth been taught to hate with all the fierceness of his nature and recognize as the conquerors and oppressors of

his race. How much there was of reason to inflame his malevolence against the English invaders who were enriching themselves out of the resources of his country was many years later revealed at the trial of Warren Hastings in Sheridan's greatest speech and in the superb eloquence of Edmund Burke.

But Andersonville was a place where all the conceivable horrors of hades were concentrated and revelled in for thirteen months, and caused the death of nearly fourteen thousand men and practically disabled for life a large majority of its survivors. Its responsible author was an enlightened American, educated in the highest military school of the country, and at its expense; and the victims were his own countrymen. He wore the garb and external demeanor of a Christian gentleman, and on each Sabbath he went with sober steps into the house of worship to listen to the psalms; and with the guilty knowledge of Andersonville in his heart he listened with bowed head to the Lord's Prayer, and heard unmoved the sweet lessons of charity taught by the Prince of Peace. And now, at the age of four-score years, he seeks with bold falsehood and ingenious sophistry to cover his mighty offenses from the view of his countrymen and claim a patriot's laurels from mankind.



When the condition of Andersonville, Salisbury and other prisons was minutely and accurately reported to "the President" by Confederate physicians and officers who were specially sent there to investigate them; when Catholic bishops and priests confirmed the shocking story of inhumanity; when the newspapers throughout the Confederacy were sounding the warning to Richmond in the boldest terms; when citizens and reputable Confederate commanders were writing letters of entreaty to Jefferson Davis to spare the South from the shame of utter barbarity, and when the dead-carts were gathering each morning from the ground a hundred corpses at Andersonville and at Salisbury, a telegraph wire connected the gates of those pens, and more than twelve counterparts of them, with the sumptuous home in Richmond in which he dined and slept!

"I feel myself safe in saying," says the Confederate Doctor John C. Bates in his testimony, "*that at least seventy-five per cent. of those who died might have been saved, had those unfortunate men been properly cared for as to food, clothing, bedding, etc.*"

Colonel D. T. Chandler, Inspector General of the Confederacy, who spent a week of investigation at Andersonville, uses these words in his testimony:

"I also urged on the department the removal of General Winder as the radical cause of many of the difficulties there. I believe that with another head of the establishment a good deal might have been done. He had not the inclination to exert himself. I also urged the removal of the assistant commissary."

To the remonstrances of Colonel Chandler and his assistant, Major Hall, concerning the fearful condition of the prisoners, with the sickly season near, Winder replied with brutal blasphemy that he "*considered it better that half of them should die than take care of the men.*"

These humane Confederate officers, not being in the dastardly plot, and yet unsuspecting its existence, never doubted that when their reports of the condition of things at the prison were read in Richmond, a speedy remedy would follow, and insure the early appointment of a competent and humane successor to John H. Winder. But the effect of their reports, and the reports of Professor Jones and Dr. Bates as well, after being maturely considered at Richmond, enlightened and astounded them, and when soon after they read the announcement in General Orders, that John H. Winder, whom they deemed unfit to have charge of the Andersonville prison, was

"hereby constituted Commissary General of *all the military prisons in the Confederacy*," they learned with honest dismay and mortification what special qualities constituted "competency" in a jailer for Union prisoners, according to the Richmond lexicon, and what line of treatment harmonized with the "system" whose operations, as now fully and authoritatively ascertained, would soon verify the prophetic words of Winder to Ambrose Spencer a few days before Christmas in 1863: "*I am going to build a pen here that will kill more d——d Yankees than can be destroyed at the front!*"

That this was no idle boast, let the graves of thirteen thousand seven hundred and five martyrs who sleep at Andersonville bear their mute but eloquent testimony. Let crippled and disease-racked survivors of Winder's Temple of Death attest the ingenuity of the architect as they meekly limp to the pension office, there to be denied a pittance from the overflowing treasury of their country, because they have no "hospital record," *and their comrades and witnesses are dead at Andersonville!* The record of a Union prisoner at Andersonville, Florence, or Salisbury, under John H. Winder's rule, was as laconic as Cæsar's dispatch, "*Veni, Vidi, Vici*," and was summed up in three words: "*Stockade, Hospital, Cemetery.*"

The writer of these pages ventures respectfully to invite the considerate attention of the Senators and Representatives in Congress and of his Excellency the President of the United States to this long-standing defect and injustice in the operation of existing pension laws in the cases of this class of Union soldiers.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *Federal Prisoners under Fire of Union Batteries—Causeless Shooting— Colonel Rose's Tunnel.*

THE writer was among the six hundred Union officers who were removed from the stockade at Macon and taken to Charleston, and there placed under fire of the Union batteries on Morris Island, from July, 1864 to October, when all were removed to Columbia.

At Charleston the Union officers were confined in the jail, workhouse, Marine and Roper Hospitals, all of which were adjacent to each other and at the margin of the "burnt district." An equal number of officers from the Macon prison were at the same time held at Savannah.

Although the placing of these officers under fire of their own guns was clearly an infraction of the laws of war, it resulted in no serious consequences, as General Gilmore was kept thoroughly posted as to the location of the prisoners and regulated the direction of his fire accordingly. The Confederates made

eager and constant efforts to discover the source of Gilmore's secret information, but all their search and vigilance failed.

It is a pleasant satisfaction as well as a duty to record the fact that, in none of the six prisons in which the writer was held during a year and eight months were the prisoners so well housed, fed, and humanely treated as in the city of Charleston. The prisoners who were confined there in the summer and autumn of 1864 will bear united and willing testimony to the soldierly treatment received from the officers and men of the 32d Georgia regiment that constituted their guard there.

Another incident will be gratefully treasured in memory: the noble Christian benevolence of the Sisters of Charity who often, in disregard of bursting shells, entered like ministering angels, bearing bread and tobacco to the captives and delicacies to the sick. Among the deplorable accidents of the firing upon the city was the destruction by fire of the convent of these noble ministers of mercy, and the generous appropriation for its re-establishment made by Congress subsequently was actively furthered and applauded by the Union recipients of their unselfish and sweet charity.

The writer will not permit this opportunity to pass without testifying his fervent gratitude for numerous kindnesses extended him in the Marine Hospital by Mrs. Hart and her little daughter Fannie, whose home was near by. It is indeed a pleasant duty to record amid all the cruelties and sufferings he witnessed such gentle and welcome deeds of kindness. He gratefully recalls the fact that the remnants of Pickett's Division, who guarded for a time the Federal prisoners taken with him at Gettysburg, stood guard over the captives a few hours after their famous and fatal charge, shared their last few biscuits with them in the retreat, uttered no uncivil word, but bore themselves as nobly with their prisoners as they had bravely with their armed foes.

In one of the writer's escapes from Charlotte, N. C., in February, 1865, after tramping the swamps for many days and nights without food or warmth, with a few thin and tattered rags clinging to his emaciated frame and with shoeless, torn and frozen feet, he fell into the hands of a squad of Confederates about two o'clock in the morning. They took him to the house of Dr. Sidney A. Johnston, a relative of General Albert Sidney Johnston, where he was guarded until the next day. Dr. Johnston and his family, although ardently devoted to the cause of the

Confederacy, were typical Southerners with whom hospitality was a religion. They prepared a meal which, although it did not include the luxury of coffee or tea, provided an abundance of good milk and substantial hot edibles to which the writer's starved stomach had been a stranger for the greater part of two years. After a warm and refreshing bath for his swollen and lacerated feet, a good bed with a *real* pillow was made for him before a cheerful log fire, and he soon forgot the misfortune of his fifth recapture in the Confederacy in blessed sleep.

The guards were mounted men who had seen active service, and the sergeant in charge, seeing that the writer could not walk with his bare and swollen feet over the frost-covered ground without extreme pain, and not having an extra horse, generously dismounted and gave his prisoner his horse; and although suffering himself from an unhealed wound, he allowed the writer to ride, and walked beside him in the road to the railroad station (where he was obliged to deliver him to other guards), a distance of about twelve miles. The writer regrets that he has forgotten the name of this chivalrous soldier, but gratefully remembers his deed. That man would never have suited John H. Winder.



The promiscuous and utterly causeless shooting of Union prisoners already referred to was practiced in all the main prisons, and the list of the slain and maimed victims would make a startling and ghastly chronicle of wanton cruelty. Of the very many instances of this species of murder that were personally witnessed by the writer during his captivity he does not recall one case of shooting for which there was the faintest shade of provocation. He has already referred to the murder of Lieutenant Turbain, which he witnessed at Camp Sorghum, near Columbia. Not less atrocious and unjustifiable was the killing of Lieutenant Otto Gerson of the 45th New York at Macon, Ga., which was also done in his presence.

This brutal murder occurred in the early part of a sultry night. The writer, being ill with fever and suffering with keen thirst, started with his tin cup to the spring near the south end of the stockade. This spring, which supplied the camp with drinking water, was protected by a sunken barrel and was always accessible day and night to the prisoners, being a dozen feet or more inside the "dead-line" and fully twenty-five feet from the post of the nearest sentinel on the stockade, from which it was at all times in full view. As he approached within a few yards of the barrel he observed two or more prisoners, cup in

hand, on the same errand, and one of these was just rising to his feet after getting a drink when the report of a musket rang out and the man, dropping his cup, fell with a groan to the ground. The writer with several others sprang to his side, and raising his head from the sand-bank was horrified to recognize in the victim Lieutenant Gerson, a brave and gentlemanly officer whom he knew. He was alive and conscious when we placed him in a blanket and bore him to shelter, but his hurt was fatal and he died after a few suffering hours.

This brutal murder was deliberately committed by a sentinel on the stockade in idle sport to win a bet made with another sentinel beside him; and in the hearing of the several officers who had preceded the writer to the spring, he had boasted that he "would shoot a Yankee before he slept."

At Libby prison there was a standing order to the sentinels to shoot a head if seen at the windows, or at a hand if placed on the bars that secured them. Nor did they always wait for even this wretched justification, but frequently fired random shots into the windows in wanton and brutal mirth. In this manner Lieutenants Burns and Hammond were shot, utterly without cause, as were Lieutenants Huggins and Kupp, and others.



Murder of Lieut. Gerson.—See page 106.



The writer vividly recalls the sight of Captain Forsyth, of the 100th Ohio Infantry, lying dead in a pool of blood on the floor of the upper middle room in Libby. He was shot through the head while reading a newspaper, and fully eight to ten feet from the nearest window. In his narrative, "Col. Rose's Tunnel at Libby Prison," published in the *Century Magazine* of March, 1888, the writer incidentally referred to this affair, denouncing it as an unprovoked and wanton murder. The stricture brought forth a letter from a person claiming to have been one of the prison guards at the time, in which he avers that the shooting of Captain Forsyth was done by a man named Weber, and that the gun was discharged accidentally. If this is true—and it is possible—the writer gladly hastens to give circulation to his defense, as he has neither motive nor wish to charge him with responsibility for the death of an unarmed and unoffending prisoner in his charge. He knows, however, that it was unanimously believed in Libby to have been wilfully done, and it is certain that the united call of the Federal officers for a satisfactory explanation of the killing was at the time treated by Major Thomas P. Turner, the commandant, with silent disdain. If there was an investigation that exonerated Mr. Weber, it was not authoritatively

announced to the officers; yet it is decidedly to the credit of the unfortunate Confederate soldier that he remembers and regrets the sad incident that cost a noble young life and inexpressibly pained all our hearts in Libby Prison.

The prisoners being confined in the two upper lofts of the building, the order forbidding them to approach the iron-bound windows was as needless as it was brutal. Twelve hundred men were for long and terrible months smothering in the six rooms whose aggregate area gave each of them a space of less than five square feet; and when a new batch of prisoners arrived, the older ones were kept busy in preventing the newcomers from going to the windows, where the sentinels were watching for a shot at the sufferer who, unaware of his peril, sought a breath of fresh air at them.

During the month of August, 1863, the writer, who was ill, climbed through the scuttle to the roof manytimes at the risk of life, when, towards evening, the heat of the sun was somewhat diminished from the blistered roof, to escape for an hour the stifling atmosphere of the swarming rooms beneath; and, hiding behind the chimney from the sight of the prison sentinels or passing Confederates on Dock street, would wait in dread for the approaching

moment when he must leave the pure air and the sight of the sky to return to the hot human hive that sent up a burning stench through the opening that, to his fancy, seemed like a shaft that led to hell.

A circumstance not wholly unlooked for soon ended these visits to the roof. While resting his head against the chimney one afternoon, a runaway horse tearing down along the canal near the prison brought him instinctively to his feet for a fuller view of the frightened animal. A sentinel, who had evidently been informed by some one of the writer's position, had left his post, and from the sidewalk east of the prison took aim and fired. The bullet flattened itself against the chimney and uncomfortably near the head of its intended victim, who dropped as quickly to the roof as though the shot had succeeded. In cautiously rising, his hand rested on the third of a detached brick which, together with the danger he had escaped by a hair, and with the recollection of a long series of bitter wrongs crowding upon him, instinctively reminded him that he had an enemy in sight and a weapon in his hand. The enemy was loading his gun for a second shot, and meantime had been joined by two other soldiers without arms, and a citizen. He was about to ram home his cartridge when a cry of

"Look out!" startled him. The alarm came near being late, for that brick descended with a speed that would have done credit to a crack baseball pitcher, as it grazed his head, knocking the ramrod from his hand. In his fright he dropped the gun, as he saw his Yankee assailant detaching another brick; the panic-stricken quartet in their haste sprang for shelter, but the lack of any organized plan and mutual understanding embarrassed them visibly, for they fell in a tangled heap; and as the writer hastily left for the scuttle, he was gratified to see the citizen on top of the animated pyramid.

This little incident supplied the guards of the prison with mirth for several days, in which the shooter did not join with any perceptible enthusiasm. He appeared with the guards in the morning in the rooms of the prison at roll call, and if his sulphurous observations, as he eagerly sought through the ranks of the Yankees "for the man that threw that brick," were such as could be decorously printed, they would be cheerfully inserted in his behalf. Thus ended the stolen visits of the writer to the roof of Libby.

The frequency with which the guards fired into the windows renders it amazing that more men were not killed; and that the casualties were not greater was possibly due to the fact that by the time a man



had lived a few months on the prison rations he was so reduced in physique that it took a good marksman to hit him.

"Indignation," remarked a sufferer, "is the only thing the Confederacy ever filled a prisoner with." There was indeed an exception, and one so remarkable as to call for special mention. It was in the person of a German captain of a New York Cavalry regiment, who had been captured in 1863. This officer was a very giant in stature and must have weighed fully three hundred pounds. His coming was an event among the prisoners at Libby, and provoked some witticisms in the newspapers as well as some variegated personal remarks among the mob that followed him through the streets to the prison door. He was an excellent officer by repute, and an intelligent and sedate German gentleman who deserved and enjoyed the cordial esteem of his fellow prisoners. Although his means and mode of life had accustomed him to generous living, he adapted himself bravely to circumstances and subsisted patiently on the scant daily ration of coarse cornbread with which in happier days at home he would have scorned to affront his dog. Nor was this all. To the unspeakable amazement of everybody in Libby he not only maintained his huge avoirdupois, but

grew *fatter* daily! The phenomena excited the prison and was the theme of eager and even heated debate among envious and attenuated rivals. The Federal doctors in Libby lectured on and about him, and the Confederates pointed with pride to him (when an investigating committee of the Southern Congress visited us) as a stupendous refutation of the "Lincoln lie" that the Yankee prisoners were being starved by the Confederacy. He immortalized himself and gave a crowning surprise to his friends and foes by escaping through the famous tunnel dug by Colonel Rose and his party in February, 1864.\*

The writer, who escaped through that hole, which was fifty-seven feet long, was several times wedged fast in it, although then of slight physique, and regards it as an impenetrable mystery how his big German comrade ever made the passage through that narrow, long, horrible grave! Nor did he succeed without a heroic and supreme effort, for the writer vividly remembers how the big man got fast in the middle of the tunnel that night and delayed him, among others, for nearly an hour in the midst of a frenzied mob of prisoners struggling fiercely to

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\*An illustrated narrative of this remarkable plot and escape, written by the author, appeared in the *Century Magazine* for March, 1888.

be *next*, and who, learning the cause of the delay—every minute seeming an hour—hurled curses on the blockaded German's head, or rather stomach. A supreme struggle freed him from the vise of death and he was soon panting and perspiring in the sweet open air of a winter night outside the old Bastile.

It is a pleasure to record the fact that he succeeded in bringing his entire\* person safely into General Butler's camp on the Peninsula, although the brave projector of the plot was, like the writer, retaken in sight of the Union troops.

It is related that a Representative in Congress from the "Hoosier State," speaking with Mr. Lincoln afterwards about the famous escape, told the President that he was one of the one hundred and nine officers who had passed through the tunnel. To which Mr. Lincoln replied, that while the escape had interested and gratified him, it did not in *his particular case* surprise him at all; "For," said the homely and lamented prince of wits, "*my experience in politics convinced me long since that there never was a hole so small in the Confederacy, nor in Washington either, that an Indiana Congressman couldn't crawl through it.*"

When prisoners first entered Libby they were relieved of all their money and valuables. There

was, indeed, some pretense of keeping a record of the sums taken and of the names of the owners, and in cases where the amount was considerable, small sums were at fixed intervals returned to the owners, in *Confederate money*, and at such rates of exchange as the whim of the keepers determined (as a matter of fact a comparative few ever saw either their greenbacks again or their Confederate equivalent), and even this soon went in purchases of extra articles of food through Turner's assistants at enormous prices. Not a third of the current premium on United States greenbacks was allowed to the robbed captives, who in a constant state of semi-starvation took "Hobson's choice" and bought and devoured their extra bread.

"Time was," said a newspaper wit of Richmond at the time, commenting on the depreciated and despised "scrip" of the Confederacy, "when we went merrily to market with our money in our purse and brought home our provisions in a flowing basket; but lo, the change! Our wife now totes our money to the dismal ruin of the provision temple and meekly returns home with her market purchases in our pocketbook."

When the brutalities at Libby and Belle Isle were scandalizing the self-respecting people of the South as well as their soldiers in the field, Henry S.

Foote, a venerable member of the Confederate Congress, who had earned the implacable enmity of Jefferson Davis once by defeating him in a memorable political campaign in Mississippi, boldly denounced and solemnly protested against the iniquity that was shaming the South. So fiercely was his protest resented by the subservient tools of Davis in Congress that his life was threatened, and finding himself powerless to avert the impending shame, he fled to the Union camps.

The writer saw a Union officer passing bits of bread through a hole in the floor in Libby to a lot of starving men in the room beneath, who scrambled for the falling crumbs like famished wolves. An unobserved guard below watched his chance and plunged his bayonet with a savage thrust into the floor an inch from the generous giver's hand.

An order forbade the spreading of a blanket on the floor of the prison in day time, and the rooms being entirely bare of bunks or seats, the men sat on the floor, resting their backs against the walls or supporting-posts, or moved about for such exercise as the crowded pen would allow. A newly arrived prisoner, too ill to stand on his feet and as yet ignorant of the rule referred to, spread his ragged blanket on the floor to ease his aching limbs. He had

scarcely laid down when Dick Turner entered from the adjoining room and, seizing the blanket behind the prostrate sufferer, kicked him twice with brutal force in the middle of the back, and dragging the blanket from under the fainting victim bore it away and "confiscated" it.

Some wounded and sick men were one day brought in a wagon to the door of the prison hospital room on the ground floor of Libby. The writer ventured near the window above to see the men taken from the wagon into the room beneath, and one emaciated man, thinking he could walk unassisted into the hospital, climbed from the wagon, and in the attempt to walk across the cobble-stone pavement fell from weakness full length upon his face. Dick Turner, who was standing by, seized the fallen and bleeding invalid by the collar, and dragging him violently to his feet, kicked him brutally several times and flung him with his full strength into the hospital room—from whence next day his dead body was borne out for burial.

A squad of prisoners were passing the prison one day, among whom Colonel Ely, of the 18th Connecticut—a Libby prisoner—recognized a sergeant of his regiment. He had the good fortune a few days before to get a box from home containing, with other

things, a small ham. Knowing well that his less fortunate comrade was very nearly starved, he generously threw the ham to him. The man ran eagerly to catch the prize, when a guard, raising his gun and threatening to shoot him if he moved, deliberately picked up the ham and bore it away in great glee that was heartily enjoyed by Turner, who stood by and witnessed the mean and cowardly act.

Cruelty was this man's pastime, and probably his greatest life disappointment was that the fortuitous circumstance of Colonel Dahlgren's death deprived him of the crowning pleasure of his career, namely: to explode the powder mine under Libby and blow up the twelve hundred Union inmates the moment the hoofs of Dahlgren's approaching cavalry should be heard in the streets of Richmond. "The minute Dahlgren got into this y'her town," said this disciple of Winder and Wirz, speaking of the affair to a Union officer afterwards, "I would have blown every one of you Yankees to h—l."

There was one lonesome trait about this man Turner that mitigates and softens in some measure the remembrance of his offenses. There was no vacancy in his nature for hypocrisy; his daily deeds of brutality were done with open and scrupulous honesty, and the long record of his infamy was an

open book to which he pointed with pride. "He knew what he was there for," and he never shirked his duty simply because he was drunk; if he had, his face would not have been familiar around Libby. He loved whisky, it is true, but he would not desert the prisoners. He did not embroider his cruelties with the stately phrases and fine rhetoric of his responsible employer at the Executive Mansion; his blows were brutal, but his was not "the hand of steel under the glove of velvet." He was a civilian, and to his credit be it said, he scorned to mask his real trade under the uniform of a soldier. When he locked the writer up in an underground cell, without light, food or fire in the cold of February, 1864, with thirty-three others crowded in a space twelve feet square, for escaping through the tunnel, and when he was told by an officer that the writer would probably die one terrible night, he replied with perfect and unaffected candor: "*Well, d——n him, let him die; that's what he's here for.*" But though a sick man, he refused to die; and not only lived to make four more escapes, but saw the hour arrive when Turner was himself an inmate of that cell, and his master a fugitive.

By the irony of fate, the famous Bastile around which cluster so many sad memories of the war has



itself travelled from its old home on the banks of the James, and now, after the lapse of a generation, attracts the curious tourist and the patriotic visitor on the shore of Lake Michigan.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *Dahlgren's Raid and the Libby Powder-Mine.*

WHEN, at the end of the war, the details of the dastardly plot to blow up Libby Prison, with its twelve hundred Union inmates, at the time of the Dahlgren raid in February, 1864, were revealed in the secret documents captured among the Confederate archives, comparatively few people in the North seriously believed that there were men in authority at Richmond who ever really meditated the slaughter, until every desperate device for concealment had failed, and the actors in the plot were forced to the shameful confession.

In his work, "The Lost Cause," Pollard refers freely to the affair, and boldly defends the villainy. Both he and Jefferson Davis quote the excuse for its intended consummation made secretly by a committee of the Confederate Congress. In this committee's report, after reciting the impending danger of Dahlgren's entrance to the city and the consequences to ensue in the release of the Federal pris-

oners, these terms are used: "*A mine was prepared under Libby Prison, and a sufficient quantity of gunpowder was placed therein, and care was taken to inform the prisoners that any attempt on their part to escape would be effectually defeated.*"

The conduct of this famous raid, one of the most remarkable and daring during the war, was entrusted to two men whose intrepid courage had been proven by the highest tests in battle—General Kilpatrick, the chief in command, leading one column of cavalry, and Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, a son of the Admiral, the other. While the former moved rapidly on Richmond, approaching it from the north, the latter contemplated crossing the James river with his smaller column above Richmond, and, sweeping down its south bank, release the prisoners at Belle Isle, cross to Richmond from Manchester, liberate the prisoners at Libby and other buildings, and moving rapidly unite with Kilpatrick's forces on the Peninsula.

But Dahlgren was fatally misinformed by the negro guide, and the attempted crossing at Mannakin Town being found impossible, his situation with so small a force became one of great peril, as the change of plan thus forced upon him rendered the junction with Kilpatrick both difficult and haz-

ardous. After several sharp encounters with the enemy in the suburbs of Richmond, he decided to join the main column, and made a rapid detour around the defenses that skirted the city on the north and toward the Chickahominy. While riding at the head of his little band through the darkness, about midnight of the 2d of March, he was passing along a narrow road leading through a dense and dismal wood, when suddenly he was startled by the rustle of leaves and crackling twigs a few feet in advance. His hand quickly sought his pistol, but before he could draw it upon his foes, or even see them, a quick cry rang through the woods on the flank of his column; the flash of a volley lit the scene for an instant, and the youthful leader fell dead from his saddle to the road, pierced by four bullets fired from the distance of a few yards, and from flank and rear. A few only of his men escaped, in the pitch darkness, from the fatal ambush. The rest were killed, wounded or captured.

The pockets of the dead leader were rifled; and his watch, together with a pocket-wallet containing a few cigars and some papers, were taken by a young home-guard named Littlepage; he handed them to his lieutenant, who returned the cigars but retained the papers. It was yet dark, but the identity of



"Death of Ulric Dahlgren"—See page 122.



Dahlgren was revealed by the lad's mentioning that the dead man wore an artificial leg; whereupon a recaptured Confederate officer exclaimed: "It is Colonel Dahlgren!" The false limb was rudely wrenched from the body, and a finger on which the leader wore a plain gold ring, the memorial of a beloved and dead sister, was brutally hacked off for its prize. The savagery was continued until the mutilated body of the dead and dreaded leader was stripped of nearly all its clothing, then carted to Richmond and for several days lay in the open part of a railroad depot, exposed to the view and coarse jibes of an idle mob attracted from the corners and slums of the city. When the piteous spectacle had been sufficiently enjoyed by the rabble, the mangled remains were taken in the night to a lonely spot by a chosen party and secretly buried.

While these atrocities were being perpetrated, the wallet found in Dahlgren's pocket was playing an interesting part in this drama. Its contents were borne to Richmond by Lieutenant Pollard and given into the hands of a Richmond editor who was, it is understood, a relative. Through what hands those papers passed thereafter has been religiously concealed, and the matter must be left to conjecture; but it is certain that a true history of their mutations

embraces a bold forgery that was designed to fix the brand of a would-be assassin upon Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, whose lips were now sealed in death, and thus seek some shred of justification both for the shameful mutilation and insult to his remains, the inhuman treatment of his captured officers and men, and for the meditated crowning infamy of blowing up Libby Prison, then swarming with twelve hundred Union officers.

The tidings of the approach of two such leaders as Kilpatrick and Dahlgren at a time when Richmond was stripped of veteran troops and defended chiefly by untried home-guards caused the utmost dismay, and Mr. Davis, his cabinet and the city authorities were seized with a contagion of fright bordering on convulsions. But fortuitous circumstances already narrated frustrated the daring and noble mission of the expedition. Dahlgren was dead and the match was not applied to the Libby Prison mine. The danger passed, and with the return of cooler reasoning power that the soothing sense of safety restored to Mr. Davis and his intimate advisers, some sense of responsibility for the iniquitous steps that had been taken in the haste and fierce resentment that succeeded fear began to dawn upon them all.



It would now be necessary to put forth a justifying cause for an extraordinary and unprecedented act that would satisfy the chivalrous people of the South and the conscience of an enlightened world, and not utterly paralyze their industrious ambassadors then abroad seeking in lobby and court the recognition of the Confederacy. A hint from the masters was enough, and a tool was found.

In Dahlgren's wallet was found some unused sheets of paper bearing the printed letter-heading of the Union Calvary Corps—a custom with commanders—and enough written memoranda in other unimportant papers to show the general characteristics of his handwriting. On one of these sheets the confidential penman produced a bogus order purporting to be addressed to Dahlgren's command, and announcing the objects of the expedition, one of which was to be the liberation of the Union prisoners at Libby and Belle Isle, and the other to "*burn the hateful city and see that Davis and his traitorous crew does not escape.*" By this it was to be understood Mr. Davis and his cabinet were to be killed or carried off as prisoners.

To this production Dahlgren's name was signed and the forgery was speedily on its mission through the newspapers and to the country. Desperate and

cunning efforts were now made to hush up the mining of Libby and to impress upon the prisoners that the whole thing was an innocent stratagem to intimidate them. Not until the fall of Richmond and the capture of the Confederate archives was the official acknowledgment of the Confederate Congressional Committee known to any one outside of Mr. Davis and those having close connection with the plot fourteen months before.

"Your committee," concludes this remarkable document, "does not hesitate to make known the facts [the mining of the prison], feeling assured that the conscience of an enlightened world and the law of self-preservation will justify our country and her officers in all that has been done."

It is, however, notably significant that the enlightened world was not taken into the confidence of the conspirators until the light was turned on by Union hands more than a year afterwards. Nor is it at all probable that the enlightened world would ever have heard of the Libby powder-mine, except as an unauthenticated war rumor, had it not been for the memorable dispatch of Lee from Petersburg, handed to Mr. Davis in church that Sunday morning, on April 2d, 1865, that drew his attention with such rude abruptness from his devotions to his

baggage, an episode described in Pollard's book, "The Lost Cause," with graphic force and stinging sarcasm.

"Care was taken," says the Confederate committee, "to inform the prisoners that any attempt on their part [to accept their liberation] would be *effectually defeated*"; and adds: "Dahlgren was killed, his command captured or scattered, the prisoners in Libby were awed and kept down."

The writer does not remember that much formal care was taken to inform the prisoners; they were indeed informed in the first place silyly, and by a loyal negro employed at the prison, who excitedly related to the prisoners how he had assisted in digging the mine and charging it with a quantity of powder which his lurid fancy increased to tons. Whatever credit we all gave to Dick Turner's subsequent announcement relating to the mine and its purpose, the colored man's report was the one that carried conviction to our minds, and thus in one lonesome instance in the war the much-derided "intelligent contraband" was vindicated.

As to the committee's remark, that the prisoners were "awed and kept down" that night, the survivors of Libby will unanimously confirm them. The writer, speaking for himself, declares with the

utmost candor, that as he lay on the prison floor that night, just over the mine, with the slave's fresh and ghastly message mixed up with the Lord's Prayer, which he now remembered with uncommon distinctness, he certainly experienced an *awe* which his publishers are requested to print in italics. A flood of thoughts and an irresistible yearning to be home, or at least farther north, crept over him; and as he lay upon the hard floor, looking upwards in the darkness, and listened for the expected sound of Dahlgren's carbines, which was to be the signal for the explosion, and pictured in his imagination the pyrotechnics which the Confederacy had prepared for its guests; as he saw in his busy fancy the mangled remains of himself and his twelve hundred comrades ascending skywards in a volcano of timber, brick, iron and mortar, and thought of Dahlgren, then a few miles distant, and of the man with the fuse only a few yards off, he admits now, when he is twenty-six years older and somewhat cooler, that he was *awed*.

His chief agony of mind was caused by the harrowing uncertainty as to how many minutes more he could be "*kept down*." He would have listened with respect, if not with favor, to any proposition of the Confederates for a conference and

compromise that did not necessarily involve the actual sacrifice of his honor or his limbs. Although he would not deny that he had participated in some unpleasant affairs in which several Confederates had been hurt, there was no absolute proof that any of his shots had taken effect, for he was but an indifferent marksman even when he was cool. Besides, if the Confederates were bent on making an example of their enemies, surely the blowing up of one-half of his comrades would have been an example sufficiently frightful for practical purposes. He felt assured that his maintenance was not a severe burden upon the South. Perhaps a truce or respite of ten days or so might be effected. The writer had lived in the South previous to the war, and had friends there. He had been baptized a Catholic. There were, in fact, many Catholics in Libby. Bishop Lynch would have been astonished at the number, had he called that night. Was the Bishop in town? He had influence with the President, and had secured that precious respite of ten days for Sawyer and Flynn, and Sawyer was a Protestant. He was but human, and he thought bitterly of that fatal delay in the tunnel caused by his fat comrade but three short weeks ago; but for which he might now be home. That German was probably at this very moment

sipping wine with his friends in New York, with a new uniform on, and a thirty days' furlough in his pocket. He hoped the stray shots so frequently heard about the streets of Richmond would not be mistaken for the proper signal, and he did fervently trust that Dick Turner, who, he understood, had charge of the fuse, was sober. He was but nineteen; and he longed for daylight and a mirror, that he might see if his hair was still black.

But the long night passed, and he rose with mingled feelings of gratitude and surprise; he fully expected to rise earlier.

The captives at Libby and Belle Isle rose that morning still ignorant of the fact that within the distance of a gunshot the heroic young Pennsylvanian who sought to be their deliverer lay pierced with bullets and in the hands of his foes, and that by that circumstance alone the most barbarous crime in the Christian era had been prevented.

The statement repeatedly made at Richmond that the order said to have been found in Dahlgren's pocket had been sent into the Union lines and there pronounced genuine, is false; the only color of truth in the statement being that photograph copies of the alleged order were shown to a few persons, not one of whom was competent by familiarity with his hand-

writing to judge of its genuine character. But truly, says the Bard of Scotland:

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men  
Gang aft aglee."

The forger blundered! In signing the order *he misspelled Dahlgren's name*, and wrote "U. Dahlgren," misplacing the h in the first syllable. Its spurious character is further shown by the use of the initial "U." instead of the full name "Ulric," which it was Dahlgren's unvarying custom to use in signing. In an examination of scores of his last letters written to his home from the field, not one was found where this rule had been departed from, even to the last one addressed to his father from Stevensburg four days before his death.

To suppose that order genuine, we must first believe that Ulric Dahlgren, an intelligent and educated young man but a short time out of college, did not know how to spell his own name and wrote it wrong in a document of such supreme importance.

Again, if he wrote that order, where are its duplicates, and where the officers and men of his command who ever saw or heard of it? None were ever found, but on the contrary Lieutenant Bartley and all the officers who were with the expedition, and

General Kilpatrick, who was the senior in command, deny that that order or any like it was ever known to them, and pronounce it bogus in the most emphatic terms.

To apply the name assassin to this young soldier, then in his twenty-second year, who had lost a leg in battle and had been promoted to a colonel's rank for distinguished valor on the battlefield, who had been reared and beloved in a Christian family, and who in nature was gentle and the personification of chivalrous young manhood, is as monstrous as the insults to his dead body were cowardly and despicable.

The sufferings of the Union prisoners had touched the deepest soundings of his noble nature, and to compass their deliverance was the most ardent ambition of his heart. Inexorable fate denied him the prize, but fame, more kind, has placed his effort beside the greatest of victories and beyond the reach of defamers. To employ the figure applied by Roscoe Conkling to Grant—"The name of Ulric Dahlgren is like a torch in the night: The more it is shaken the brighter it burns;" and as long as our history lasts and the story of the Union prisoners is remembered, that name will be cherished with affection and veneration.



A single circumstance aside from all others proves beyond possible doubt that the employment of the forgery to justify the meditated murder at Libby and the ghoulish treatment of Colonel Dahlgren's body, was an afterthought. Many hours before Dahlgren was ambushed and killed, and therefore before it was even claimed by the conspirators that the order had been seen or that it existed, the mine under Libby Prison was prepared, and that the atrocious deed would have been consummated had the entrance to the city been effected at the time is as certain as human evidence ever foreshadowed the intended execution of a crime; and that crime would have been committed whether the column of rescue was commanded by Dahlgren or Sheridan, and whether they had announced their intentions in orders or not.

The eulogists and biographers of Mr. Davis will indeed be singularly fortunate if, in the light of these established facts, they can persuade an enlightened world to believe that the massacre of the Libby prisoners was never really intended, but was a bloodless stratagem of war, and should be regarded merely in the light of what Judge Ould softly describes in fine Latin as "*legislation in-terrorem.*"

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Responsibility for Interruption of Exchange* —*Choice of Prisoners for President* —*The Assassination—Arrest* *of Jefferson Davis.*

I N his account of Andersonville published in *Belford's Magazine*, Mr. Davis, after charging the United States Government with responsibility for the interruption of the exchange, says:

“Andersonville, Ga., was selected after careful investigation for the following reasons: It was in a high pine woods region in a productive farming country, had never been devastated by the enemy, was well-watered and near to Americus, a central depot for collecting the tax in kind and purchasing provisions for our armies. The climate was mild, and according to the best information there was in the water and soil of the locality no recognizable source of disease.

“A stockade was constructed of dimensions adapted to the number of prisoners who might probably be confined there. It was on a hill overlooking the valley of the Sweetwater, a tributary of which stream flowed through the prison enclosure.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The difficulties encountered in the care of the large and ever-increasing number of prisoners may be briefly enumerated thus:

"1. The exceptionally inhuman act of the North in declaring medicines to be contraband, to which there is but one, if indeed there be one, other example in modern war.

"2. The insufficient means of transportation and the more inadequate means of repairing railroads and machinery, so that as the war continued the insufficiency became more embarrassing.

"3. The numerical inferiority of our army made it necessary that all available force should be at the front; therefore the guards for prisons were mainly composed of old men and boys, and but a scanty allowance of these.

"4. The medical officers were not more than were required with the troops, and contract physicians disliked the prison service, among other reasons, naturally, because of the impossibility of getting the proper medicines.

"5. The food was different from that to which most of the prisoners had been accustomed, particularly in the use of cornmeal instead of wheat flour. Of the latter, it was not possible in 1864 to get an adequate supply in Andersonville. It was not starvation, as has been alleged, but acclimation, unsuitable diet and despondency which were the potent agents of disease and death. These it was not in our power to remove."

Continuing, Mr. Davis refers to his own ill-treatment by General Nelson A. Miles at Fortress Monroe, whom he scolds as a heartless vulgarian

under whose care he was reduced to little more than a skeleton. "The selection of a gentleman," says Mr. Davis, "was not suitable to the cruel purposes of E. M. Stanton," then Secretary of War.

Speaking of the choice of General Winder to rule over Federal prisoners, he says: "He was selected, among other reasons, because of confidence in his kindness to prisoners, as specifically stated by James A. Seddon, Secretary of War; S. Cooper, Adjutant General; Geo. W. Brent, and *Jefferson Davis.*"

Seddon, in 1875, wrote a letter to W. S. Winder, in which he says of General John H. Winder: "I thought him marked by real humanity toward the weak and helpless, *such as women and children for instance*"—a tribute which Mr. Seddon wrote certainly with his tongue in his cheek, after the fashion of sly humorists.

Then comes Mr. Davis' tribute to his old friend, written from Montreal in 1867 to Dr. Stevenson, chief surgeon in charge at Andersonville, who was writing a book to exonerate himself and those who consorted with him in the iniquities there. He says: "I have never doubted that all had been done for the comfort and preservation of the prisoners at Andersonville that the circumstances rendered pos-

sible. General Winder I had known from my first entrance into the United States army as a gallant soldier and honorable gentleman. Cruelty to those in his power, defenseless and sick men, was inconsistent with either the character of a soldier or a gentleman. I was always, therefore, confident that the charge was unjustly imputed."

General Imboden is quoted at length by Mr. Davis on the subject of Andersonville—for what reason is not clearly disclosed, as the former says he knew Wirz but slightly, and his statements show that he knew nothing about the prisoners or their keepers worth quoting.

He complains that he was not called on as a witness in the Wirz trial to tell all he thought he knew; and when he wrote it up for the *New York Herald*, the editor declined to publish the account, which at last found a receiver in Mr. Davis.

Undoubtedly *The Herald* did the General a good service in declining his MSS., having seen some of his efforts at war history, for which he had a consuming *penchant* that often annoyed General Lee and exasperated his commanders. Mr. Davis does the General the honor to quote him in saying that the murderer Wirz was a humane and innocent man selected as a victim to the "bloody Moloch of 1865"—whatever that was.

It seems hard that the General who proved such a terror to Federal sutlers in the Valley during the war should have his name given wrong in so conspicuous an article by his old master. Such is fame and the lot of those who put their faith in princes.

There is no reason to suppose that General Imboden would himself have permitted any cruelty to the prisoners if he had had any real and permanent authority over them. But the truth is, being incapacitated for active service, he was sent to look around the prisons for a little time, for want of other employment, and was simply tolerated by Winder as a visitor, and had no real authority, as he would have easily discovered had he gone further than a mere offer of suggestions, and these Winder treated with silent disdain.

The Union prisoners taken in the Gettysburg campaign will remember General Imboden, whose men had charge of them during the march from Gettysburg through the Shenandoah Valley to Staunton. Beyond a habit of exchanging hats and any loose wearing apparel with the prisoners while they were asleep, the writer, who was with the column, saw no vicious ill-treatment of the prisoners; in fact, the guards who indulged in these "swaps," as they termed them, made it a rule when

they took an officer's hat or coat to leave their own gray raiment beside the sleeping prisoner — a thing that never would have been tolerated for a moment by the guards of Winder. These "swaps" went on, however, to such an extent that our Union officers who left Gettysburg very blue grew prematurely gray; and so much so that in passing through the various towns in the Valley they received cheers and pie as Confederates from enthusiastic citizens. Had John H. Winder been in charge, instead of General Imboden, the Union prisoners would have gone through the towns of three States clothed only in sunshine and covered only with their blushes.

In army reminiscences General Imboden, although not faultless in the matter of strict accuracy, is always entertaining; and his career as a commander is tolerably well described in the phrases of our national game; he was not much of a batter, but he was fair in the field, and, like his comrade Rosser, he "ran bases with great speed."

Mr. Davis quotes some resolutions said to have been adopted by prisoners at Savannah in September, 1864, and to which is appended the name of one P. Bradley, chairman of a committee in behalf of the prisoners, one of which reads:

“That while allowing the Confederate government all due praise for the attention paid to the prisoners, numbers of our men are consigned to early graves; and

“*Resolved*, That ten thousand of our brave comrades have descended into untimely graves, caused by difference in climate, food, etc.; and

“*Resolved*, That we have suffered patiently, and are still willing to suffer if by so doing we can benefit the country; but we most respectfully beg leave to say that we are not willing to suffer to further the ends of any party or clique, to the detriment of our families or our country.”

This irresponsible and inaccurate expression of a few malcontents who had borrowed the familiar excuses of their keepers about “difference in climate, food,” etc., and which utterly belies the sentiments of the vast majority of the Union prisoners, strongly suggests the high-sounding proclamation of the three tailors of Tooley street, whose resolves began: “We, the people of England,” etc. That Mr. Davis should be driven to the necessity of seizing this straw with such ludicrous eagerness is a painful signal of distress. Nor will the date of the resolutions lose significance, near as it preceded the Presidential election of 1864, in which Mr. Davis had so keen an interest. When from this he descends to quote an anonymous letter-writer in the *New York*



*Daily News* (anti-war paper), who was "said to be an Andersonville prisoner and a member of General Sheridan's staff," and in which the writer endeavors to prove Wirz a humane man and his comrades all thieves, liars, and cowards who had brought on themselves all the miseries of which they complained, etc., Mr. Davis confesses with amazing candor his pitiable poverty in defensive resources.

A manifest object is to show that the expressions of a few malcontents (doubtless coached by the rebel authorities), who, if they live, will read with mortification in 1894 their words of 1864, was to create the impression that the Union prisoners in the autumn of that year were in a mutinous state, "cursing the Lincoln administration," and longing to so express themselves at the polls in November.

The narration of an incident well remembered by the prisoners will effectually dispose of this flimsy falsehood which Southern newspapers were industriously circulating in the Confederacy at the time.

In an election held in the Andersonville stockade in October, 1864, for the purpose of showing the choice of the prisoners between Mr. Lincoln and General McClellan, the opposing candidates for the Presidency, General McClellan received fifteen hundred votes and Mr. Lincoln six thousand. At

"Camp Sorghum," near Columbia, S. C., where the writer was confined with the Federal officers, and where an election was held during the same month, General McClellan received less than three hundred votes, while Mr. Lincoln received eleven hundred.

It is quite needless to add that none of the Southern newspapers to which these returns were sent saw fit to publish them, although the editors must have known that it would have been interesting news to their readers, contrasting strongly as it did with their previous representations.

In referring to these facts, no impeachment is made of the patriotism of the minority who cast their ballots for their beloved old commander whom they had followed on the Peninsula. Their suffrages, justly interpreted, evinced no waning of love for the Union and no diminished faith in its restoration. They fought as bravely in the field and suffered as patiently in prison as did their comrades of the majority; but no honest man will assert and no sane man will believe that the famishing patriots who cast this ballot were "cursing the administration of Mr. Lincoln," nor yet condemning the just and necessary stand taken by our Government to hasten the end of the Confederacy, then gasping for life, by spiking the rifles of fifty thousand fat and healthy Confed-

erate prisoners, then held in the firm grip of Grant. In field and prison the Union soldiers, Democrats and Republicans, fought, suffered and died side by side; the same trench covers them at Andersonville and Salisbury, and the "red dew of one baptism is over them all."

It is clearly manifest that in this, Mr. Davis' final statement on Andersonville, he makes no whole-hearted attempt to disprove the charges of inhuman and systematic cruelty inflicted upon the Union prisoners, and that his only real hope and his paramount object was to divide the public verdict on the question of his personal responsibility.

It is not seriously required to analyze his own weak inventions for defense, nor the worthless indorsements of the disreputable coadjutors whom he quotes, six of whose names appear with his own in the specifications and charges on which Wirz was found guilty and hanged. To expose their feebleness and falsity is as needless as to use a sledgehammer to crack a filbert; but they are interesting exhibits of unparalleled effrontery, and furnish a fitting sequel to the most gigantic villainy that ever this country witnessed.

The guileless air with which his partners in guilt are introduced with himself, and the grotesque

spectacle of Stevenson, Seddon, Wirz and the Winder trio as they gravely proceed to exchange certificates of character and innocence with each other, is proof that Mr. Davis, in his eighty-first year and in his feeble health, still retained amid the dismal wreck of his fortunes some lingering sparks of a humor that had often diverted his friends in earlier and happier days—monstrous as it may seem that the tragedy of Andersonville should have been chosen as the theme for its exercise.

But even this performance is outdone by his old friend and servant Seddon, who, writing a letter for publication in 1875, and speaking of Winder, says: "I thought him marked by real humanity toward the weak and helpless, *such as women and children, for instance*—by that spirit of protection and defense which distinguishes the really gallant soldier. To me he always expressed sympathy and manifested a strong desire to provide for the wants and comforts of the prisoners under his charge," etc.

The posting of this pious certificate of holiness on the tomb of John H. Winder, who, if alive, would have resented it as an intolerable impertinence, will be a revelation to the acquaintances of Mr. James A. Seddon who never suspected his latent genius as a satirist.



"Shot by the guard at Libby."



This will be the better appreciated as the name and deeds of the subject are recalled to the memory of his afflicted countrymen. The day after Winder left Richmond to take charge of Andersonville, a Richmond paper said: "General Winder left yesterday for Andersonville to take charge there. *May God have mercy on the Yankee prisoners!*"

So well, indeed, was he known at Richmond, that the Confederate soldiers and citizens bestowed upon him, even early in the war, the descriptive title of "Hog Winder," an aggravated and unprovoked libel that must have wrung a unanimous and indignant grunt of disgust from every maligned porker in the Confederacy.

How he "was marked by real humanity toward the weak and helpless, such as women and children, for instance," was displayed in his blasphemy and blackguardism in the presence of the humane and Christian ladies whose donation of food for the starving prisoners was brutally refused admission at the prison gate; and when the monster Wirz, his subordinate, uttered insults and abuse so filthy and vile in the presence of those noble ladies, that witnesses would not repeat it at his trial.

Says Mr. Davis: "General Winder I had known from my first entrance into the United States army;

cruelty to those in his power, defenseless and sick men, was inconsistent with the character of either a soldier or a gentleman."

Beside these tributes to the righteousness of John H. Winder, let us place this memorable evidence of his chivalry:

"HEADQUARTERS MILITARY PRISON, }  
"ANDERSONVILLE, GA., *July 27, 1864.* }

"GENERAL ORDERS No. 13.

"The officers on duty and in charge of the battery of Florida artillery at the time will, upon receiving notice that the enemy has approached within seven miles of this post, open upon the stockade [prison] with grape-shot, without reference to the situation of affairs beyond these lines of defense.

"JOHN H. WINDER, *Brig. Gen'l Commdg.*"

This would seem to be the place for Judge Ould to re-appear and explain that this order, like the sentence of Sawyer and Flynn, the Confederate law consigning colored United States soldiers back to slavery, and the meditated slaughter of twelve hundred Union officers by the Libby powder-mine, was also to be added to the ever-increasing acts in the Confederacy classed as "*legislation in-terrorem.*"

When this miscreant was suddenly stricken down on hearing that Sherman had reached the sea



three months later, and near the very gate of the stockade that held his starving and freezing victims, it is said (whether true or not, the expression was perfectly characteristic) that, realizing that he must go, he braced himself up and uttered these words: "My trust is in Christ; I hope I shall be saved yet. *Be sure and cut down the Yankee prisoners' rations.*"

There can be no doubt that had he lived until the tenth day of November, 1865, he would have expiated his crimes on the scaffold beside his subordinate Wirz.

A countless number of his acts during the war might easily be cited to show the fearful depravity of the man whom Jefferson Davis, with eternity near, declares he selected to rule over Union captives because, after a lifetime acquaintance, he believed him "*to be kind to prisoners!*"

Among the Southern people to-day, evidence could be easily multiplied to show the depravity of the man whom Davis and Seddon vouch for; but to borrow the quaint metaphor of Mr. Davis' benevolent bondsman, Horace Greeley, "in order to test the quality of a ham, it is not necessary to eat a whole hog." A little of Winder goes a good way.

Mr. Davis wastes great and unnecessary energy in his endeavor to show that Wirz would not and could not, from personal knowledge, show that he was in the personal confidence of the former in the iniquitous plot that was afoot at Andersonville, and there is indeed a reasonable doubt that he ever was. His well-known gust for cruelty and readiness for murder when it was deemed necessary for his purposes were the special qualities that determined the selection of the fiendish Swiss captain—not as a trusted manager, but as a reliable and relentless underling who could be used in his own special sphere without being admitted to the inner counsels of his employers. A human monstrosity and murderer he was, but his intellect was feeble, and his lack of *finesse* excluded him from the close inquisition and from any compromising confidence.

Winder, who was Davis' bosom friend for thirty-four years, and Stevenson, the "scientist" and vaccinator who had charge of the medical branch of the Andersonville business, were more to his taste in carrying out the "system." They did not receive their instructions in writing from Richmond, but they knew every hour of the day and night "what they were there for," namely: to see that "natural agencies" should not be interfered with in doing the

work "faster than the bullet." This brace of worthies were not much given to letter-writing about the real condition of things at Andersonville, but both were in close and constant conference with the Richmond authorities; a telegraph wire connected their headquarters with the "President" and his Secretary of War.

Poor old Father Boyle, the confessor of Wirz, is drafted into the service of Mr. Davis as a witness fifteen years after the war, and made to repeat the story of how through him "a high cabinet officer" offered to commute the sentence of Wirz the night before the execution if he would implicate Mr. Davis in the crime of Andersonville.

"The high cabinet officer" is not named, but it is not difficult in the light of Mr. Davis' previous expressions to conclude that Mr. Stanton is the person meant.

Father Boyle, Wirz, and his counsel Schade are each reported as saying that they were called upon by a man whose name neither of them knows, and who told them separately that he was authorized by "the high cabinet officer" to assure Wirz that his sentence would be commuted on the condition named, and that Wirz, having no personal or positive knowledge of Mr. Davis' part in the Andersonville crime,

refused to give the compromising testimony, and was hanged next morning, and as a matter of course protesting his own innocence.

If this alleged emissary's story is true, we are compelled to assume that the Secretary of War and the President of the United States declared through a nameless messenger to the murderer Wirz, his lawyer and his confessor, their readiness to prostitute their high offices in a shameful bargain to secure the conviction of Davis and subvert the law that demanded the murderer's life, and that they were willing to trust the dangerous knowledge of such a contract to hosts of eager and implacable political and personal foes.

That Edwin M. Stanton, the greatest of War Ministers, was immaculate or over-scrupulous in methods amid the extraordinary circumstances that environed him during the war, his warmest partisans will not claim; but that he was the reckless, clumsy fool that Mr. Davis paints him in this instance, his bitterest foes will not believe.

That a nameless man approached the three persons named, as they declare he did, may be assumed as true, but the inferential charge that he came with the knowledge and authority of the Secretary of War and the President is preposterous and

infamous. To reasoning minds a far more plausible theory is that the emissary came not from a "high cabinet officer" to save the life of Wirz, but from astute partisans of Davis then infesting the capital, and was a bold device adapted for effect and to improve the uncertain fortunes of Mr. Davis, then a prisoner at Fortress Monroe.

As to Father Boyle's expressed confidence in the innocence of Wirz, it indicates nothing but the direction of his sympathies, and proves nothing but the guileless benevolence of the good old priest's heart and his susceptibility to the wiles of the subtle conspirators who were using him.

But even if this whole story were true and the nameless man was really the emissary of the Secretary of War, it would still leave the real question about Andersonville absolutely untouched, as Mr. Davis well knew; and herein lies the proof of what has already been said in this narrative: that Mr. Davis in his final writing on Andersonville does not seriously attempt the impossible task of disproving the charges of systematic cruelties to Federal prisoners in the South, but that his paramount object and hope was to divide with a plea of poverty and ingenious sophistry the public verdict as to his share in the atrocious plot.

It was indeed a deplorable situation for a man in his eighty-first year, to whom nature and training had given brilliant capacities, and to whom fortune had presented great opportunities, to be at last compelled to resort to the subterfuge and sophistry that characterizes his last defense and emphasizes his last lamentable failure.

Technical provisions and impediments of constitutional law interposed in 1865, with the unprecedented condition of the country emerging from civil war and in the chaos of the early stages of reconstruction, seemed to render it impolitic, if not impossible, to single out Jefferson Davis for trial on charges of treason; and amid such an unparalleled condition of affairs he escaped the just penalties of his deeds at Andersonville, Salisbury and Belle Isle. Our highest jurists and statesmen knew then, and our country knows now, that the people of the South and a large portion of mankind would have charged the North with the malicious deception of trying Davis for the Andersonville crime, while in reality persecuting, condemning and degrading him as the leader of Secession.

Mr. Davis and his more sagacious partisans were not slow to see and take advantage of the situation. From the moment the gates closed upon him at

Fortress Monroe he was posed as a martyr, and to the study and enactment of this his last rôle his remaining days were studiously devoted; and circumstances singularly combined to aid him.

The North, amid the flush of joy that followed Appomattox, was stricken by the assassination of Mr. Lincoln. Jefferson Davis was a fugitive, and the fierce resentment that rose against the vile brood of assassins paralyzed for a time the national reason, and a few irrational men in authority at Washington unwisely and unjustly coupled the name of Mr. Davis with the assassination plot.

Then came the lamentable folly and flaming offering of an immense reward for his capture, and the consequent arrest of a large number of belated loyal citizens who wore whiskers under their chins, and who indignantly shaved on learning that they had been mistaken for "Jeff Davis."

Fortunately for Mr. Davis and unhappily for the whole country, he was taken, and a hundred thousand dollars of the public treasure was thus wasted in the purchase of a white elephant, and to the well-known disgust of General Grant and other men of his sterling good sense.

The wisdom of Lincoln was never more forcibly illustrated, nor his secret wishes more dextrously

imparted than in regard to the then probable capture of Mr. Davis, when he related to General Grant (who had delicately invited some expression of his wishes) the story of the Irishman who, feeling that he could no longer keep the temperance pledge, suggested to the priest who had handed him a "soft" drink, that he'd be "moity glad if his riverence, while his back was turned, would drop a little whisky in the lemonade *unbeknownst* to him."

But the wise Lincoln was no more, and greedy and rapacious political adventurers swarmed to the capital like the locusts to Egypt. Buncombe and cheap jingoism succeeded in drowning out the voices of wise counsellors; the boast and bluster of demagogues succeeded the words and deeds of tried patriots; the armies of Grant and Sherman struck tents and left for their farms and homes; political hacks who had survived the draft masqueraded in "loyal" colors; and a survey of the situation about the national capital recalled the pithy saying of Sam Johnson, "that patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel."



## CHAPTER IX.

### *After Chickamauga—General Grant Appears —Battle of Lookout Mountain— The March to the Sea.*

THE fact that more than fifty Union prisoners were killed and twice that number cruelly injured by the dogs employed at Andersonville, is not squarely denied by Mr. Davis, as the ambiguous and significant reference to that atrocity will show. "I have been informed since the war," says Mr. Davis, "that there was not one bloodhound at Andersonville prison, but some deer or fox hounds were kept to follow prisoners who, when paroled for voluntary service, broke faith and fled." He carefully refrains from any reference to the countless number of times he was informed by citizens of Georgia, humane Confederate officers and Southern newspapers about the barbarous contract between Winder, Wirz and Wesley W. Turner, the latter the owner of the pack of fierce bloodhounds during the war.

The following accurate description of one of these beasts, well known to still-surviving prisoners,

will hardly pass at a bench show as the portrait of Mr. Davis' fox or deer hounds among dog-fanciers:

G. F. Elliott, formerly of the 1st Marine Artillery, an Andersonville prisoner, says: "I have a pretty lively recollection of a Cuban bloodhound named 'Spot' at Andersonville; weight, one hundred and fifty pounds; height, three feet four inches; length from tip to tip, six feet five inches. Rather a queer kind of a fox or deer hound. He mangled more than one poor fellow who strove to get back to 'God's country' without permission from Jeff Davis or Wirz."

Negro soldiers were not deemed socially good enough to serve the Confederacy as soldiers until Lee declared that the Southern cause would be lost in the spring of 1865 without their help, and not until two months before his surrender did the Southern Congress pass the law authorizing their enlistment. Up to that time the black man was not thought worthy to serve with Lee in Virginia, but, by Davis' admission, dogs were good enough substitutes for Southern soldiers to serve with Winder, to track, maim and kill Union prisoners in Georgia.

Perhaps it may soften the grief of wives and mothers in the North to learn, after the lapse of so many years and from so high an authority as Jeffer-

son Davis, what particular kind of hounds they were that tore their protectors to death at Andersonville.

Mr. Davis says: "Andersonville was selected for the reasons that it was in a high pine-woods region, in a productive farming country; had never been devastated by the enemy; was well-watered and near to Americus, a central depot for collecting the tax in kind and purchasing provisions for our armies; and it was on a hill overlooking the valley of the Sweet Water."

So far as the prison stockade was concerned, it was indeed in the midst of a high pine woods, every tree of which was cut down within the stockade before a single prisoner entered it; and in August, 1864, when the thermometer ranged from 110, 120 to 127 and 130 degrees, thirty-five thousand starved skeletons stood in the fiery flood of the sun and looked over the "dead line" and wall into the inviting shade of those same tall pines as lost souls might gaze from Hades into the Garden of Eden.

"It was on a hill overlooking the Sweet Water." Precisely so. That clear, deep and beautiful stream flowed past the fainting multitude just two hundred and fifty feet outside the hospital and prison wall. The prisoners' only drink came from the sluggish ditch, a "tributary" of the Sweet Water, and which

was already the sink of a Confederate camp before it entered the prison inclosure, the stench of which, citizen Ambrose Spencer swears, could be detected at a distance of two miles. The water of that, the only stream accessible to the prisoners, was so polluted that even when used for bathing it produced gangrene in numerous instances.

Mr. Davis continues: "It was near Americus, a central depot of supplies, for collecting the tax in kind and purchasing provisions for our armies." Correct again. It was in the midst of the "Garden of the Confederacy" the stockade was built. The Union prisoners starved with plenty in sight. They blistered, fainted and died in the sun's fiery flood with the shade of the tall-pine region in full view. They died with agonizing thirst around the poisonous prison ditch, with the crystal stream of the Sweet Water, fifteen feet wide and five to ten feet deep, flowing untouched, cool and delicious, two hundred and fifty feet beyond the "dead line"!

What, then, shall we say of Mr. Davis' wretched mockery of excuses in the light of these facts proven by witnesses living and dead, Union and Confederate?

"The insufficient means of transportation!" The supplies were within the radius of a few miles, and

long trains passed the gate of the stockade by day and night bearing supplies to Lee's army in Virginia from the "Garden of the Confederacy," in the midst of which the Union prisoners were starving.

Transportation! When Christian men and women brought food for the prisoners *and furnished the transportation* the donation was refused blasphemously and insultingly at the prison gate by John H. Winder! And this was the man whom Mr. Davis asserts he selected to rule the Southern prisons "because of his confidence in his kindness to prisoners"!

"The act of the North declaring medicines to be contraband!" Did the stringency of the blockade at Savannah, Charleston and Wilmington that shut out tea, coffee and quinine dry up the Sweet Water creek and destroy the shade of the tall-pine region? Were the cabbages, sweet potatoes and corn of the "Garden of the Confederacy" contraband? Was it not proven on the Wirz trial the amount of such garden vegetables raised about Andersonville in 1864 was unprecedented? Did the blockade make it necessary for the doctors and nurses there to use gangrene-infected rags several times over to dress fresh wounds, as Professor Jones and Dr. Bates declare they saw done? "It was impossible," says

the former, "for any wound to escape contagion under these circumstances."

Imported medicines, coffee, tea, and other foreign products were indeed scarce in 1864. But the South was not destitute of rags, shade, straw, fuel or fresh water, and the Confederate Dr. Bates solemnly declares that in his professional opinion the allowance of these easily obtainable necessities would have saved the lives of seventy-five per cent. of the prisoners who died.

So unmistakable was the evidence of the existing murderous plot, and so jealously did the vile brood of conspirators guard the operations of the "natural agencies," that this humane physician concealed raw potatoes in his pockets and dropped them surreptitiously to prisoners suffering with scurvy, as an anti-scorbutic, even after he had been warned that it was strictly forbidden to take anything in to the prisoners and after he had been arrested many times.

Mr. Davis continues: "The food was different from that to which most of the prisoners had been accustomed, particularly in the use of cornmeal instead of flour, and of this it was not possible in 1864 to get a supply at Andersonville."

Did the scarcity of flour prevent the separation of the husk from the meal, the prisoners' only food,

which, as Professor Jones says, acted as an irritant to the alimentary canal without adding anything to the nutriment of the bread? Was it not shown at the time that the unvarying use of this food rapidly prepared the victims for the ravages of scurvy which swept them away by thousands? Was not the use of meal supplied in this way the very thing which was boldly recommended by a miscreant high in authority in the commissary department at Richmond? Did not that villain ingeniously point that husk out to the Richmond authorities as one of the "natural agencies" that was to do the *work* "faster than the bullet"?

When Professor Jones recommended the making of soup for the sick out of the cow and calf heads, adding a few vegetables such as sweet potatoes, cabbage and corn, which, he says, would have been highly nutritious and with little additional cost, and the materials for which soups, he says, existed in large quantities, was it done? No; those heads were thrown into the ditches outside the stockade, and instead of putting life in their soup, they were left to rot and put death in their drink and pestilence in the air.

The statement of Mr. Davis that the prisoners were removed in the autumn of 1864 "to other points

suitable for their safety and health" is misleading and characteristic.

The prisoners were removed from Andersonville, not to preserve their health, but to prevent their threatened capture by Sherman, then confronting Hood before Atlanta. In this connection the words of Hood are interesting and show how valuable was the service which even the starving prisoners were rendering to the Union cause and tying the hands of an army: "*The presence of thirty thousand Federal prisoners in my rear [Andersonville] prevented me from moving on his [Sherman's] rear and destroying his depot of supplies at Marietta.*" (See "Advance and Retreat," by General J. B. Hood.)

General Joseph E. Johnston, whose retrograde conduct of the campaign had depressed the spirits of the Southern people and occasioned clamorous protests from the alarmed people of Georgia to Richmond, gave Mr. Davis a long desired pretext to remove him, and the less sagacious but more aggressive Hood was made his successor.

Davis came to Atlanta, the old infirmity for interference having again taken possession of him, and demanded a radical change. Hood was commanded to take an army back to Tennessee, to fall on Thomas and destroy him, and do other things that



would compel Sherman to loosen his hold on the throat of Georgia. In a bombastic public speech he virtually announced the intended movements of the army; and his positive assurances that there was to be no more retreats through Georgia delighted the citizens and ladies, dismayed the corps commanders, and greatly obliged Sherman, who read the speech next day at his headquarters, and governing himself accordingly prepared to strike for the sea.

The country knows the sequel: how Sherman kept serenely on his great march, and how thoroughly and handsomely Thomas, "the Rock of Chickamauga," disposed of Hood is a chapter of history that Mr. Davis remembered with bitter mortification to the latest day of his life. The bitter cup was subsequently filled to the brim when Slocum planted the Union flags over Atlanta, and when at last a fierce public clamor and a dire military necessity forced upon him the restoration of Johnston, whose advice and aid he humbly solicited when Lee had surrendered. Richmond had fallen, and he who could but shortly before dictate to the Confederate Congress and armies was a powerless and despairing fugitive.

It was not the first time that the Confederacy had paid dearly for Mr. Davis' interference with commanders in the field.

After the bloody battle of Chickamauga and the retirement of the Union forces to Chattanooga in September, 1863, Mr. Davis had paid a visit to Bragg's army, which had Rosecrans' army shut up there. From the palisades on Lookout Mountain he examined with his glass the position of the Federal troops; he saw them hemmed in, with the Tennessee at their back, and their lines of supplies and communications held by the Confederates. Before it, the Chattanooga Valley and Missionary Ridge stretching to the river on the north, and Lookout towering over Moccasin Point below the town like an impregnable Gibraltar; all frowning with their batteries upon their half-famished foes, who were reduced to their last few crackers, and burning roots for fuel. Ten thousand horses and mules had died of starvation, and there were not animals enough left to drag a field battery.

Mr. Davis saw it all and smiled exultingly. He felt assured that the surrender of Rosecrans' army was only a question of a few days, or a few weeks at the farthest. Bragg could and must now spare a corps to send to Knoxville and crush Burnside. Accordingly, Longstreet was withdrawn from Lookout, which with its natural strength could be securely held by a comparatively small force.

Having fully submitted his views to Bragg, and deeming his present mission ended, he left for Richmond; and as he rode he doubtless began the construction of a proclamation that was to be the greatest effort of his life in heralding to the Confederacy the destruction of two Federal armies, and swelled with pride at the anticipated applause that was to reward his military genius.

But events soon followed that wrought a marvelous change in the "President's" programme, and taught him once again the vanity of human aspirations.

The silent but invincible Grant came riding over the mountains without escort but his staff, and, passing in sight of the besieging Confederates, entered Chattanooga. Rafts were floated past Bragg's pickets at the base of Lookout in the night; the Confederate force at Brown's ferry was surprised and captured, and a pontoon bridge was laid across the Tennessee. In a few hours communications were opened with Bridgeport, thence to Nashville, and soon an abundance of supplies was flowing into the beleaguered camps amid Union cheers and music. *The master had come*, and victory was in his eye.

On the 24th of November the gallant Hooker, with Geary, stormed and carried the heights of

Lookout, and the next rising sun revealed to the cheering army in the valley beneath the Union banner floating from the mountain summit. The Confederates were at bay on Missionary Ridge, Sherman having crossed on pontoons the Tennessee on the north; Hooker, following the routed forces from Lookout, crossed Chattanooga creek toward Rossville, while Thomas confronted Bragg's center.

In the afternoon, Hooker having succeeded in crossing the creek with his artillery, a signal gun fired from Grant's headquarters on Orchard Knob was answered by cheers as the whole Union line advanced upon the frowning ridge lined at base with Bragg's entrenched infantry, and crowned at the top with cannon in heavy breastworks.

Sherman assaulted the Confederate right, Thomas the center, and Hooker the left. Sheridan led his division on foot up the steep ridge under the belching guns of the "Star fort" and its flanking trenches. Hooker carried the hills to the Confederate left, and doubled it up in wild disorder. "Pat" Olerbourne's force on the right toward Tunnel Hill fought with stubborn valor and resisted Sherman's savage assaults long and bravely, and Bragg sent reinforcements there. Grant, observing it, dispatched a division to strengthen Sherman. By sun-

set Thomas had pierced the Confederate center near the headquarters of Bragg, who, with his staff, barely escaped capture. The Federal artillery of Osterhaus from an elevated point on Hooker's line raked the Confederate left and rear, and, panic seizing it, the whole line crumbled away and fled in mad confusion down the eastern side of the ridge, leaving artillery, flags and prisoners in the hands of the charging and cheering Union victors. The rout continued pell-mell toward the Georgia line, with Sheridan hot at Bragg's heels until darkness ended the pursuit.

Had Longstreet's fine corps been left on Lookout instead of being sent away at the suggestion, or rather dictation of Mr. Davis, the result might have been different. The presence of the "President" came to be regarded in the army as the shadow of coming defeat.

General Grant, speaking of Mr. Davis' well-known and fatal weakness, remarks with grim humor on this campaign: "It was not the first time that Mr. Davis came to the relief of the Union armies by reason of *his superior military genius.*"

\* \* \* \* \*

History furnishes no nobler example of heroism than is shown in the readiness with which the Union

prisoners met death in its most dreaded forms, and spurned the guilty bribes of liberty and life offered by their jailers. When death was reaping a ghastly harvest, and more than a hundred a day were borne out of the death pen at Andersonville, there was a standing offer of liberty to those who would renounce their allegiance to their country. Among the captives were skilled workmen of every trade, whose services as mechanics were eagerly desired by the Confederate authorities, and were sought on assurances of freedom, good pay, shelter, food and all bodily comforts.

A beggarly corporal's guard only were induced in all those fearful months to yield to the tempters, out of the forty-nine thousand Union captives confined at Andersonville—a bit of heroism that called forth one of the most eloquent speeches ever delivered by Garfield.\*

On one occasion a number of the prisoners who were known as masters of various trades were brought out of the stockade where General Cobb, it was announced, wished to address them. The prisoners were under immediate charge of sergeants selected by themselves from the stockade, and faced Cobb in closed ranks and with close attention. He proceeded

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\* Garfield's speech to Union ex-prisoners at Toledo.

with all the bland persuasive sophistry of which he was master, to express regret for the hardships which circumstances compelled them to suffer as prisoners of war; referred to the liberal terms upon which the Confederate Government had struggled to effect an exchange, and feelingly deplored their rejection by the Federal authorities. By gradual advances he reached the point:

It must be clear to every soldier before him that the Government of the United States had abandoned them; and having done their duty as soldiers in battle, and risked their lives and lost their liberty and submitted patiently to the privations of prison life, that Government had no right to utterly sacrifice their lives in captivity merely to carry out a policy that seemed to promise some temporary military advantage. Under these circumstances, were they not justified in accepting their liberation on the conditions which he was authorized to offer, and which he felt they could do without a scruple or sacrifice of their honor as men and soldiers! They would, as a matter of form, be required to renounce under oath their allegiance to the Federal Government; they would not be required to serve at the front with the Confederate army, but would be assigned to certain kinds of work with which their

training had acquainted them as mechanics, etc. He finished his speech, and scarcely had his last sentence been uttered, when every prisoner faced promptly to the right and without a single word of response marched with measured steps back into the stockade. Cobb, if he still retained a fragment of conscience, must even in his embarrassing failure have felt a glow of pride in such an enemy, and must have contrasted in his mind at that moment the heroic fidelity of these men as they passed through the gate through which few of them would ever return alive—with his own record in the past toward his country.

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## CHAPTER X.

### *Release of Union Prisoners—Under the Stars and Stripes Once More— Home!*

THE fortunes of my life had made me a participant in stirring events and a witness in thrilling scenes. My birthplace was within a few miles of the Falls of Niagara, and often in my youth I had stood on the cliff and looked into the river beneath as it bounded away, after its mighty leap, in braiding billows of foam through the rock-bound gorge to Ontario. I had listened in awe to the deep thunder of the cataract and gazed spell-bound and in dumb wonder upon the majestic picture formed in the splendor of a rainbow.

I had seen a beautiful city in flames and mothers with their children weeping amid the ruins of vanished homes, and had seen the ocean in its fiercest wrath from the deck of an imperilled ship.

As a soldier, I had witnessed victory and defeat in the campaigns of McClellan, Pope, Burnside and Hooker; had seen an army corps surprised and in

the full tide of rout and panic amid bursting shell and showering bullets before the cheering and charging line of Stonewall Jackson a few hours before he fell in the front of my regiment at Chancellorsville.

As a wounded prisoner at Gettysburg, I stood behind Pickett when his division melted away in my sight in the blaze from Hancock's line, and saw Cemetery Ridge fringed with the waving banners of the Union victors.

I marched as a captive with Lee's retreating train through the mountain pass at midnight, beside the wagons filled with shrieking wounded, amid a fierce storm and crashing thunder, when the vivid lightning revealed only to the struggling men and beasts the narrow and perilous road that overhung the deep mountain gorge, while the wind howled through the bending pines like lost souls and hosts of pursuing demons.

But none of these scenes, vividly as I recall them, ever thrilled and touched me with such depth and power as did the release of the Union prisoners which I participated in and witnessed in a North Carolina meadow on the first day of March, 1865. Fortune and fame would have rewarded the artist

who could have painted that picture, or the pen that could fittingly describe it.

The days of the Confederacy were numbered, and a general exchange of prisoners was decided upon; but hope seemed to have died out in the hearts of the Union captives so utterly that little credence was given to the assurances of the Confederates that their liberation was agreed upon, notwithstanding the fact that a marked change in the demeanor of the guards and their officers was manifest during the last fortnight of February. Yet amid all this suffering and despair there was no faltering in their love for the Union, or a whisper of diminished faith in the ultimate triumph of our holy cause. Unconquerable love and faith amid unspeakable sufferings was the crowning glory of the Union prisoners.

Those who had their hopes awakened by external signs about them gave them no tongue, but jealously secreted them as if possessed by some superstitious fear that speech might banish the blessing for which their souls were wildly thirsting, and which they felt by some indefinable instinct was hovering near. They moved about mutely, like spectres, among each other; a spark of pity seemed at last to have entered the hearts of their jailers. The guards relaxed

their vigilance, and conversed with freedom and some approach to humanity with the poor defenseless creatures; there was indeed now little need of guards, for not more than a corporal's guard of them had physical strength enough to have walked to the Union lines if every sentinel had withdrawn.

The guards began to let the captives approach their path, and even pass it, to get good water. They began to hand them tobacco and bread from their haversacks, like real *battlefield soldiers*. The angel of peace had whispered to friend and foe. *The dead line had vanished forever!*

In the last few days of February the prisoners of Andersonville, Salisbury, Florence, Millen and other places broke camp, and boarding freight trains and open platform cars, usually a hundred or more to a car, started towards Goldsboro and Raleigh. The Union officers who, a few days before, had arrived at Charlotte from Columbia, where they had been confined during the winter, were also put on board of a freight train and started North. Opinion was about equally divided between them as to whether this was to be a journey to liberty or to another prison.

The assurances of the Confederate officer in charge that they were really on their way to be

exchanged was by many whose hearts were sick from deferred hope interpreted as a ruse to prevent attempts at escape; but the unusual civility of the Confederates toward us, and the lax manner in which the train seemed to be guarded, sent "exchange stock" higher than it had touched for a year; and although none dared to acknowledge their hopes it was impossible to conceal the deep excitement which every brightening eye betrayed and the hungry yearning that was possessing every heart.

At Goldsboro the train on which I was with fourteen hundred Union officers halted for a few hours, and here at daylight several long trains of platform cars arrived at the depot packed with our poor fellows from Florence, Salisbury and other points. The night had been keen and frosty, and it was impossible to tell whether the shivering and almost naked spectres were white men or negroes. Our guards permitted us to approach them, and we scanned their thin, wild faces in search of acquaintances. My brother was among them, and I passed the platform car where he was several times, as I learned next day. They could hardly answer our questions intelligently, or articulate more than to piteously appeal to us for a piece of cornbread, a

bone, or anything, or to let them warm themselves a bit at some fires we had built outside the depot.

The officers promptly made way and ranged the sufferers around the fires, gave them bits of their own rags, and gathered fragments of bread which they craved but could not masticate with their swollen gums and teeth loosened by scurvy. A very few had hats or shoes. Some kind women of the town brought milk and we fed the weakest with spoons.

Many had died during the cold night ride, and I and others took the dead from among the dying on the open gravel cars. A humane Confederate officer to whom I applied gave me permission with a few other comrades to carry a number of the dying to the boiler-room of an old saw-mill some distance outside the guard line, simply on our promise to return. The proprietor of the mill, a kind-hearted man, readily allowed us to arrange the poor fellows in easy positions before the cheery fires, with bits of blankets, old clothes, and some straw under them. Those who could not speak expressed their gratitude in smiles and looks of mute pathetic eloquence. We pressed their hands and then left them—and forever.

Next morning, March 1st, the long trains of captives started toward Wilmington. I was with the

officers in the advance train, and while I live I shall remember the oppressive, strange silence of the men as the train approached the Union-outposts, with a large white flag floating over the locomotive. There were several stops for water or other purposes, and during these delays the faces of the men was an interesting study of speechless but keen agony. The stop of a few minutes only brought cold perspiration to their foreheads and put pain in every heart, and once when the locomotive *backed* the cars for a short distance, a cloud of despair settled like a pall over the mute sufferers and a fervent prayer trembled on every lip.

Conversation was affected at times, but it was a dismal failure. One thought—one hope was in full possession of their souls, and that none dared to utter. The day wore on, on leaden wings, and the train seemed to be creeping like a snail. At last it rounded a curve in the woods and entered a broad meadow which was bordered at its eastern side by a tall pine forest. On entering this opening the locomotive slackened speed, snuffed like a horse scenting a hidden danger, sent up a shrill whistle, and stopped!

A prisoner in our crowded freight car, with distended eyes and a face that revealed his agitation,

rose trembling to his bare and bruised feet and tottered to the side door and looked out ahead. Every eye was on him as he clutched the side of the door, and, springing into the air as I have seen men do in battle when struck with a bullet,\* he screamed three words that electrified every heart and brought the weakest to their feet: "*There it is!*"

We crowded to the door; the sentinels made way and laid their muskets against the car as we leaped to the ground in a tangled heap. Yes, thank God, there it was at last—*The Stars and Stripes!*

One piercing scream of joy went up from the famished multitude as they bounded and fell from the doorways of the cars, and tears streamed down every stained and worn face as the beloved banner of the Union, so long hidden from them, floated in full beauty and majesty from the top of a tall pine.

Another minute and a quick, eager eye caught another sight, and again a wild shout rang over the meadow: "*There they are!*" Yes, thank God, out from the tall pines a troop of men wearing the loyal blue came at a quick measured step, their bayonets flashing and an officer leading them toward us!

Some of our poor fellows, demented by their long trials, not understanding what it all meant, but





The sight of their flag.—See page 178.



with the old instinct of escape upon them, in the cunning of insanity took advantage of the guards' negligence and the prevailing excitement, and hid in ditches, or crept under the cars and ran as fast as their bare and bruised feet could bear them in the direction of their old prisons. The strongest of the prisoners chased and brought them back without the assistance of the guards, who now paid no attention to sentinel duty, but mingled with the excited prisoners, and were bidding them a kindly good-bye.

Other trains followed, and soon a countless multitude of blackened, hatless and barefooted skeletons in rags and with wild eyes swarmed out of the freight cars, the strongest carrying those who could not stand.

All were ordered to stand and wait for the preliminaries in progress. The Confederate guards left us, and, led by their commanding officer, started to meet the Union detachment approaching in the meadow. They met, halted, and facing each other presented arms in military courtesy, and came to an order arms, leaving a lane fifteen feet wide between them. The opposing commanders shook hands, conversed aside a few minutes, and drew pencils and books from their pockets.

The eager captives were eyeing these proceedings in a fever of excitement. The Confederate

commander raised his hand and beckoned them to advance. Each man, clasping the hand of some weak comrade, moved forward, and a silence fell over all, as if conscious that they were treading hallowed ground.

As I re-entered our car to recover some trifle, I observed a young soldier lying on the floor, where his comrades in their wild excitement had forgotten him. At first I thought he was dead, but his eyes looked beseechingly into mine as I came to his side. He was a boy, apparently not more than sixteen; he was in rags and barefooted, and a mere skeleton. In answer to my question his thin lips moved, but his tongue could give no utterance. I remembered now that he had been put in our car at Raleigh, and was said to be a New York soldier from Andersonville prison; but no one knew his name, his acquaintances, if he had any in prison, being dead.

I bent over him and told him that we were exchanged, that our troops and flag were in sight, that we were going home, and that he must go with me; I would carry him to Wilmington. The feeble smile and sudden light that came into his eyes told me touchingly that I was understood. I resolved that he should not die a prisoner. I picked the boy up tenderly; his weight was not

more than a child's, and a sentinel helped me reach the ground with him.

Meantime the prisoners began to pass through the lane between the Union and Confederate troops; and as I bore the poor boy through the gate to liberty, the eyes of the Union soldiers glistened with tears, for all could see he was near the end. As the prisoners passed the point of release in the meadow, they broke into a run—those who could run—and streamed in screaming hundreds to the woods, near which a colored regiment was drawn up along the road to salute the prisoners. They were the first colored troops I had ever seen, and as the prisoners tottered by them in their rags, tears were on their dusky cheeks.

Friendly hands had reared an arch over the road, and in leaves and evergreens we read the words, "*Welcome, brothers.*"

The released prisoners had now increased to thousands, and as they tossed away their rags and threw their wrecked hats into the air, the forest rang with their screams of wild joy. The band was playing the national airs, and the strongest men and the bravest, who had never faltered at the cannon's mouth, now gave way to nature's majesty. They embraced the trees and kissed the ground, and

falling upon their knees the sufferers raised their skeleton arms above them, and, with eyes streaming with tears, sent up an impassioned thanksgiving to God as did the delivered tribes of Israel.

Some good genii that day seemed to have hung Aladdin's lamp over our rags. We had but to touch it and the earth blossomed with blessings, and heavenly mercy seemed descending like the gentle dew over the famished but freed captives. Above them the flag of their country waved welcome to the wanderers; a flood of thoughts came thick and fast upon them, and their hearts were leaping wildly in their breasts. Already sweet visions rose before them. Already their homes were in sight. The sweet melody of their children's voices and holy sounds of peace and home fell on their ears; and wives, mothers and loved ones were waiting at the gate!

"'Tis sweet to hear the honest watch-dog's bark  
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;  
'Tis sweet to know an eye will mark our coming,  
And look brighter when we come."

In pathos that scene beggars description, and can live only in the memory of its witnesses.

I carried my poor burden to the margin of the wood, and laid him tenderly down under a tall pine

from whose top the Union flag was floating full to the breeze, and where the unknown boy might see it wave its benediction over its dying defender. A few comrades joined the sad little group and knelt. We were not long delayed; I held his thin hand and a prayer was said; and thus on liberty's bright edge, with his failing eye resting on his country's flag, somebody's darling lay while the angel of death touched his cruel fetters and they fell, and his immortal spirit mounted to its eternal freedom!

As I looked into the tear-dimmed eyes of brave men that day, the words of the sweet old song came with their truth and power to my memory as never before:

"Go watch the foremost rank in danger's dark career;  
Be sure the hand most daring there has wiped away a  
tear."

We followed the road like a disorganized mob; no one seemed to be in charge, but soldiers in the camps that we were constantly passing pointed us in the direction of Wilmington, and soon it came in sight. There was a group of prisoners who had in the different prisons been my most intimate companions and several of them had shared with me in the perils and sufferings of five escapes. Those whom I shall here name had but a week before

escaped with me from Charlotte by running the "dead-line" at night under the fire of the sentinels. None of our party was hit, but a bullet through my blouse collar showed a close escape. One poor fellow on the same night, in making the attempt to escape, was shot and killed. His bride, hearing of the prospective exchange, was waiting for him at Wilmington.

My immediate companions were Lieutenant Wm. Bierbower, Lieutenant Eugene Weeks, Captain Harry G. Dodge, Captain George L. Schell, and Captain Wm. H. Nash. This group formed a subject for which a painter might have sought in vain within the range of civilization. We had all retained the staffs used to help us through the swamps in our late escape, and our appearance collectively suggested the witches in Macbeth. Who ever has seen Charlotte Cushman in the character of *Meg Merrilies* would see her costume outdone in that of Bierbower. Weeks' chief covering consisted of half a blanket which he boasted had gone through the Mexican war. The number and size of its holes invited from Dodge the observation that the rebellion had gone through the blanket. Dodge wore on his head the rim of a Confederate hat, and his long light hair floated in a fantastic tassel through the crown; his pantaloons



resembled in their varied patches the ruin of a crazy quilt; he had on one foot a broken shoe of immense size, while the opposite leg was hidden from view in the top of a tall cavalry boot; but as there was no foot whatever to it, we all suspected that he retained it simply as a fond memorial of his cavalry service.

Schell had no hat at all, his head being wrapped in an ancient bandana; his shoes he had made himself out of the sleeves of his coat, and as he had no shirt his arms were entirely bare. The ragged remainder of the coat was secured at the throat with a piece of rope, which gave one the impression that he had just escaped lynching as a witch.

Nash, who was the tall man of the party, had months before in some unknown way come in possession of a pair of tight riding pants several sizes too small for him, the bottoms barely reaching his knees. He had on his feet an old torn pair of carpet slippers, and as he had no stockings nor underclothing, and had a hood made from a piece of an army blanket on his head and a portion of a gray jacket clinging to his shoulders, he would have preserved a small farm easily from the devastation of crows.

As for myself, I was a poem in rags. I had the mere remnant of the summer blouse and pantaloons

I had worn when captured at Gettysburg twenty months before. The sleeves of the blouse I had long since sacrificed to make stockings with, and now my feet were covered only with the sleeves of my old red flannel shirt. Strings and wooden skewers kept my tattered raiment clinging to my frail form, for I had not one button in my entire wardrobe. I wore on my head the rim of a chip hat, and what was left of my old flannel shirt I clung to desperately; it had now no sleeves, and from my frequent and unskilful washing it had shrunk to such a degree that persons at a distance might have mistaken it for a coral necklace. Since it was of no visible use except for my sore throat, I was openly charged by my friends with wearing it around my neck for mere style. If my mother had met me then, I had no apparent means of convincing her that I was her son, except possibly by my vaccination marks.

Thus our group entered Wilmington on the first day of March, 1865.

Several thousands of the released prisoners had preceded us, and as we walked on in the middle of the street without any fixed destination, soldiers and citizens gazed on the tattered multitude from the sidewalks and windows. None of us presumed to walk on the sidewalk beside clean and civilized

people; we kept the middle of the street, and trudged aimlessly, homelessly, and happily on.

Suddenly from a group of soldiers and citizens on the sidewalk I heard my name called, and looking up saw a citizen approaching with extended hand. Instantly, to my joy, I recognized Mr. William Outter, formerly the sutler of my regiment. How he knew me he could hardly explain himself, as he surveyed me in my torn costume and dismal plight. In a few words he gladdened me with the information that he was now the proprietor of a large store, where, he said, I could get "anything from a needle to an anchor," and pay for it when Uncle Sam paid me, that solid old relative being then in my debt for nearly two years' pay as a lieutenant.

He insisted that I should go with him forthwith and be scrubbed, clothed and fed, and restored to some semblance of a Christian. I gratefully accepted his generous offer, only on the condition that my destitute companions might share in my good fortune, to which he cheerfully assented; and after presenting them severally we followed our kind friend to his store, keeping at a respectful distance, that kept him laughing the whole way.

We entered his store, a substantial three-story brick building, filled with soldiers making all kinds

of purchases, and saw at once that the extent and variety of its commodities fully justified his description. We pushed our way to the back of the store; a clerk proceeded to take our measures for neat blue fatigue suits, shoes, hats, and all. This done, we were led up-stairs and given "something to warm us" in our host's private apartments.

After a merry chat, a stout and smiling colored servant entered and, bowing, electrified us with the announcement: "Gemmen, yo' baffs is ready!" A bath! Clean clothes! Our dinner ordered! The steamer at the dock to take us to Annapolis next morning, where two years' pay and a thirty days' furlough awaited us!

It was too much for poor tramps to have crowded into one day. We all cried again, and bit our fingers, and stuck ourselves with pins, to see if this was not another of those visions of sleep that had so often illumined the darkness of those fearful prisons.

We followed our dusky guide to the upper loft, which was unoccupied save by some miscellaneous storage. There was a large tub for each of us, two-thirds full of clear water in a tepid state; beside each was a chair on which was laid a heap of good rough towels and a generous chunk of castile soap. I

smelt the soap, fondled it, and had a strong impulse on me to eat it.

Several more servants entered and laid our new clothes out on the floor. These outfits were complete, and included underclothing, neat shoes, stockings, handkerchiefs, tooth-brushes, etc., with our names pinned to our property. There was an abundance of good running water in the room. The colored man swept our piled rags out the back window, and they were promptly set fire to; he then left us with the assurance that we would not be disturbed; we bolted the door, gave three cheers, and "went in."

But, as the novelist would say, "let us draw the curtain over this scene." If the reader thinks this is giving undue prominence to so ordinary a thing as a bath, let him put himself in our place, and bear in mind that to us such a bath was no ordinary thing, but a blessing rich and rare, and to ignore it in this narrative would be base ingratitude.

When, in half an hour, arrayed in our new suits, we came down to Mr. Cutter's rooms, where he awaited us with "something to keep the chill off," he pointed us out with pride to several Union Generals who had "called in to see a man." Here the fragrance of an approaching dinner reached our senses

that made us quickly lose interest in the conversation. But our kind host was not quite done with our preparation, and the dinner was to be ready in three-quarters of an hour.

He led us down the street a couple of squares and into a neat barber shop, where in a few minutes each of us was given a chair. Our long locks were neatly cropped. We were shampooed, polished with stiff brushes and combed until our scalps fairly glowed, and we stepped into the street fragrant with cologne. We started towards Mr. Cutter's, passing on the way several groups of our late fellow prisoners, who, being still in rags, made way for us, and gazed after us with the puzzled look of men who vaguely thought they had seen us before. We each felt certain that never before had these men looked so utterly poverty-stricken. We returned with proper courtesy the salutations of those who recognized us, but as we had an engagement we did not encourage extended conversation.

We had gone but a little distance when I recognized Lieutenant John Davidson, of the 6th New York Heavy Artillery, an old fellow-prisoner, approaching. He was accompanied by an emaciated, blackened and tattered spectre. Davidson, pointing to his companion, asked: "Do you know this com-

rade?" I looked at the poor wreck, and a strange instinct rather than any external sign told me, in spite of dirt and rags, that I knew that face and form; but before my scrutiny was completed, the voice that pronounced my name revealed to me—my brother Patrick. He had, unknown to me, been wounded and captured near Petersburg the year before, and had suffered at Danville, Salisbury and Florence while I was held at other prisons. He was my eldest brother and a private in the 5th Michigan Infantry. This was my first meeting with him since half an hour before the battle opened in the bloody Peach Orchard at Gettysburg, where he had bade me good-bye, his unvarying custom on the eve of a battle.

He was indeed a sad wreck. I could not, however, induce him to return with me to Mr. Cutter's store, to be provided for like myself, preferring, he said, to wait until he reached Annapolis, for which place he was to leave with other enlisted men by steamer that evening. I got him to accept some refreshments and some money, however, and promising to meet me soon at home he went off radiant enough, enjoying a good cigar, which could ever make him happy.

Poor fellow! the cruel marks of his captivity and wounds were afterwards carried to his grave. As each of us stood there that day of our happy deliverance, we little dreamt that our dear young brother Thomas had died at Andersonville six months before! It was a merciful ignorance that gave us that one day of happiness in our soldier lives.

Our transformed party returned to Mr. Cutter's store, and were taken upstairs to the private dining-room and seated around a large circular table. A door opened, and the aroma that assailed our senses was positively overpowering. Heaven only knows how welcome it was to men who had known the dreadful torment of ceaseless hunger for so many fearful months. We were surveying the white table cloth, the napkins, the shining glasses, bright knives and dishes, and several general officers had asked as a special favor to be allowed to stay in the room and see us eat that dinner.

It was soon borne in by waiters and laid smoking hot before us. How can I hope to describe that banquet! I will not desecrate the delightful remembrance of it by a tame and tasteless chronicle of the savory edibles; let it be remembered that in all those terrible months we had never tasted coffee or tea, and now it was steaming before us in neat cups, hot and delicious.



How the steaks, eggs, ham and smoking potatoes, hot biscuits and sweet butter melted away before us! How we winked and exchanged with each other in pantomime the speechless expression of our happiness! Schell and Dodge sprinkled their pie with happy tears, and the rest of us could barely resist the impulse of putting the remnants of the repast in our pockets.

The banquet over, we lit cigars and went forth for a stroll over the town, and with an air of proprietorship that created a positive shade of coolness between us and our late prison comrades, whom we were frequently passing. What a smiling, friendly look everything about us seemed to have! How we all talked at the same time, like roystering school-boys, about the happy home-returning, now so near!

It is not often in the lives of men that so much of happiness follows so swiftly upon so much suffering, and is showered upon them in a single day.

It is said that death is sometimes caused by both sudden grief and sudden joy. Certain it is that many deaths occurred that day among the released prisoners, and, judging from what I saw then among men whom long and cruel sufferings of mind and body had reduced and unnerved to the danger point, I am convinced that in the wild tumult of their

sudden happiness there was more than one instance where the feeble spark of life was extinguished in the flood of joy that overwhelmed them on the bright shore of liberty.

On March 2d we boarded the steamer *General Sedgwick* and steamed out to Cape Fear in sight of Fort Fisher, upon whose ramparts our brave comrades had so recently planted the Stars and Stripes; and after a rough night off the North Carolina coast we entered the Chesapeake and landed at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, where we were greeted with music and cheers and a royal welcome.

The quaint old Maryland capital was soon swarming with prisoners; the enlisted men finding comfortable quarters and good fare in the barracks at "Camp Parole," adjacent to the town, while the officers, having the liberty of the city, sought quarters in the hotels, or were given accommodations in private residences. The little postoffice and the telegraph office were soon besieged by eager throngs of the prisoners, and mails were soon speeding and every wire humming with the glad tidings of their liberation to their loved ones.

Within a few days, under a general order, three months' pay proper was given to the men "on account," and this generous promptness of the Gov-

ernment, which for once in history broke loose from red tape, was quickly followed by the issuance of thirty days' furlough to each officer and soldier.

And thus, after unparalleled trials in which enduring affection for each other had been welded in the fire of long suffering, old comrades bade each other a loving God-speed and farewell, and forgot not to shed their tears of sympathy for the host of their martyred brothers sleeping at Andersonville, Salisbury, Millen, Florence and Belle Isle.

I was made happier still by the prompt and kind notice of my Colonel, Michael W. Burns, of my promotion from Second Lieutenant to Captain of my company, my commission from Governor Fenton dating the first of March, 1865, the day of my release from a captivity of twenty months in six prisons, during which I had made five escapes, being each time re-taken. In a few days, with my furlough in my pocket and happiness in my heart, I was on the train speeding home.

A month from then the curtain went down at Appomattox. The great Rebellion, with its blood, bitterness and tears, and the cruel Bastiles of the Confederacy, were things of the pathetic past.

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## CHAPTER XL.

### *Twenty-five Years After—"Peace on Earth; Good Will Toward Men."*

ON the second of July, 1888, exactly twenty-five years after I had been wounded and taken prisoner near the gate of the Sherfy house at Gettysburg, I re-visited the great battle-field. I stood with my daughter beside me, and some visiting comrades and friends, on the summit of "Round Top." A group of visitors, including some Confederates, with their wives beside them, around us, their children mingling with those of the Union veterans, were searching in merry and eager rivalry for bullets and stray mementoes of the battle. A guide was pointing out the places and objects of greatest interest to the audience, as all gazed in rapture over the magnificent valley stretching away before us, clothed in the emerald robe of summer.

A few yards behind us rose the rocky spur where a stone marks the spot where Vincent and Hazlett died together in the hot struggle for Round Top. Beside us, the steep declivity up which our

PEACE ON  
EARTH,  
GOOD WILL  
TOWARD MEN



J. M. G. Co.



Union artillerists had dragged their guns with ropes in those critical moments in which the gallant, quick-eyed Warren had bid the signal flags keep waving, as he dashed away to hurry up the approaching infantry. Below us, from the glen, rose the moss-bearded and weird rocks of Devil's Den, whose crests and niches had given shelter to the crouching Southern sharpshooters, and whose deep, ghostly caverns had given them bloody and inaccessible graves.

Among us stood a group of Signal Corps veterans with their flags, and these were waving to the distant Seminary Ridge, not the old signals of battle, but the nobler messages of peace. Interpreted, these were the words: "*Peace on earth, good will towards men*"; and they were borne across the battle-field to the Seminary cupola from which Lee had watched the struggle in '63.

From the base of the hill where we stood, a narrow, quiet lane stretched along and bordered the wheat field, passing monuments that stood like white sentinels to mark the line where the Emmettsburg road enters the bloody Peach Orchard and goes creeping toward the town. Along this angled line it was that the Third Corps, under the gallant Sickles, had met the savage assault of Longstreet in the

second day's battle, and where the soldiers of the North and South lay across each other in mangled and ghastly heaps.

To the right, beyond the low swale, still stood the "little clump of trees" on which Lee had fixed his eyes at the supreme moment in the last day, and where he cast the losing die of Confederacy in Pickett's furious onset.

Still beyond rose the slope to the beautiful Cemetery Hill, with its semi-circle of graves. Summer vines and roses canopied the little pavillion where the martyred President and Emancipator had uttered words of eloquence that will outlast the monuments that symbolize the nation's gratitude to its slain defenders. From her white throne rising above the green summit the fair Liberty goddess looks lovingly down upon the peaceful graves of her sleeping sons.

Beyond the town and valley the Blue Mountain wall goes rolling through fair Maryland, and rocky gateways curtained in soft haze mark the mountain paths to the valley of the Cumberland, once the blazing path of the invader from the Susquehanna to the Potomac.

As we gazed in awe over the superb scene, recalling the hour when these hills rocked under the



deafening thunder of cannon, and looked upon the fields beneath us smiling with golden-bearded wheat and tasselling corn, where death once gathered a cruel and crimson harvest and two great armies had faced each other for three days in a leaden hurricane of death, what memories the scene invoked! What blood and tears, what heartburn and woe our country had known since last I saw this field in the battle smoke! What mighty events and marvellous changes in the land since I crossed yonder mountains in a fierce midnight storm with Lee's retreating and defeated host!

The fields were now humming with the sounds of peace; monuments rose on every hand; and as far as the eye could reach showed patriotic pilgrims and gray-haired veterans where horse, rider, friend and foe had gone down in one red burial.

From the branches of a cedar a red-breasted robin was sending up his melody of peace—a love greeting to the living and a tender requiem for the dead; while over all the majestic panorama the descending sun shed its divine halo.

The soldier who has learned amid suffering the true significance of the words "my country" cannot look upon such a picture unmoved. None can love the child like the mother who has suffered for its sake.

None can love the land like the soldier who has bled and endured all for its preservation in battle-field and dungeon. To know how sweet a thing is liberty, it must be seen through prison bars. To see the beauty of our flag and comprehend the true significance of the beloved emblem, it must be hidden from the eyes of its followers in arctic nights, and from its defenders suffering for months and years in the cruel dungeons of the foe, then suddenly through the night of despair shine forth from the shore of liberty like the rainbow and the glow of the aurora.

The soldier who thus stands on Round Top and views the majestic picture before him, and remembers the story those hills and valleys tell, will find the words of Scott whispering to his heart:

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said:  
‘This is my own — my native land!’ ”

A soldier's benediction on our country, from the pebbled beach of Superior to the everglades and orange groves along the southern gulf, and from sea to sea!

Hail and God-speed to the ship of state, with her precious freight of freedom! New dangers may indeed arise, and false lights seek to lure her to dangerous rocks and treacherous shoals. But the

same divine hand that guided her through the red tempest of the Rebellion will be her pilot still. Patriots yet unborn will be on her decks to defend her, and Washington's warning, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," will ever be her watchword as she speeds majestically on her course to the shining shores of her high and holy destiny.

"Fear not each sudden sound and shock;  
'Tis of the wave, and not the rock,  
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,  
And not a rent made by the gale.  
In spite of rock and tempest roar,  
In spite of false lights on the shore,  
Sail on! nor fear to breast the sea;  
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee;  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
Are all with thee, are all with thee."















